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THE HULSEAN LECTURES

FOR

M.DCCC.XLIX.



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THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE :

IN

NINE SERMONS,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

IN THE YEAR M.DCCC.XLIX.

AT THE LECTURE FOUNDED BY THE REV. JOHN HULSE, M.A.

BY

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M.DCCC.L.

TO THE
REV. HENRY WILKINSON COOKSON, D.D.,
MASTER OF ST. PETER'S COLLEGE,
AND LATE VICE-CHANCELLOR;

THE
REV. WILLIAM WHEWELL, D.D.,
MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE ;

AND THE
REV. RALPH TATHAM, D.D.,
MASTER OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE ;

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSES,
PREACHED BY THEIR APPOINTMENT,
ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

THE REV. JOHN HULSE, M.A., by his will bearing date July 21, 1777, founded a Lectureship in the University of Cambridge, to be held by a Clergyman in the University of the degree of Master of Arts, and under the age of forty years: the Lecturer to be elected annually on Christmas-day, or within seven days after, by the Vice-chancellor, the Master of Trinity College, and the Master of St John's College, or any two of them: the subject of the Lectures to be as follows; "The Evidence of Revealed Religion; the Truth and Excellence of Christianity; the Prophecies and Miracles; direct or collateral proofs of the Christian Religion, especially the collateral arguments; the more difficult texts, or obscure parts of Holy Scripture;" or any one or more of these topics, at the discretion of the Lecturer.



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LECTURE I.

NATURAL RELIGION; CHRISTIAN FAITH.

MARK IX. 24.

Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

IF we would estimate rightly the value and importance of the Christian Dispensation, we shall not be content to view it merely as a system standing by itself, or connected only with the Mosaic Institutions; it will be necessary to consider what relation it bore to those religious principles and persuasions, which, before the Gospel was promulgated, were generally current among men. Did it form an alliance with any of the existing modes of faith, or was it directly opposed to them all? Did it recognize them as substantial verities, or explode them, and cast them out, as the morning chases away the baseless dreams of the night? Shall we say that the divine Author of our Religion began by overthrowing every vestige of ancient faith, and then upon fresh foundations reared a new and goodly edifice; or did he merely rebuild what had fallen in, and establish again what had become ruinous and decayed?

A hasty and partial view of the Gospel-scheme might lead us to adopt one or other of these opinions without qualification. But it would be an error to suppose that Christianity only published again, in another form, and with stronger sanctions, what had already been made known by the light of Natural Religion; for it is certain that many things in the old time were hidden from the wise and prudent, were not discoverable by the help of Natural Religion, which now are revealed unto babes. And it would be no less erroneous to assert, that until Christ came the heathen world was without any true knowledge of God, that pagan mythology was a mere fable from first to last, a mass of human folly, containing not one particle of heavenly truth. Such a supposition is contradicted by the fact, that when the Apostle of the Gentiles opened his message of glad tidings, whether to the most enlightened or to the most ignorant of the heathen, he did not begin from the beginning, nor labour to convince them of the existence and attributes of God, but he took for granted a knowledge of such things, he appealed to certain religious principles, which, he said, they already possessed. Upon this subject the careful perusal of Holy Scripture enables us to form

a conclusion, which is confirmed by a reference to the monuments of heathen antiquity. Many things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world were, for the first time, revealed in Christ; insomuch that his advent is described, in the figurative language of prophecy, as the creation of “a new heavens and a new earth¹.” But, on the other hand, it appears that God had already in time past vouchsafed to men some knowledge of himself and of his will, not only by speaking at sundry times and in divers manners to one highly-favoured people, but by lighting every man that cometh into the world, whether he be Jew, or Greek, or Barbarian; by enabling all eyes to see clearly, in the things that are made, proofs of his eternal power and Godhead; and by placing in every heart a witness of his moral attributes, of his righteousness, his holiness, and his truth.

It cannot therefore be denied, that some divine truths were communicated to men at the beginning, that they entered into the original constitution of our nature, that they are innate and fundamental notions, for the possession of which we are as directly indebted to our Great Creator, as we are for the facul-

¹ Isai. lxxv. 17.

ties of our minds, or our bodily senses. And these truths, being thus innate and fundamental, had not been entirely eradicated even from the minds of the most barbarous of the heathen, at the time of the coming of our Lord. Buried they were to a great extent, and concealed out of sight, by the superstitions which had gathered around them; but they existed still. Christ brought them again to light; he revealed their proportions and connexions; he made them also the ground-work of other truths, which he established upon them:—

1. Thus through the various systems of heathen mythology, under all the countless forms of polytheism, we are able to trace the belief in one Supreme Being; a belief not indeed steadily held in the mind, often entirely abandoned, yet continually re-appearing, and asserting its authority. Our Lord confirmed that belief, and made it familiar to mankind. He revealed to them that God whom they had ignorantly worshipped. To form any adequate notion of God must, indeed, always be far beyond the reach of any finite intelligence. Christ certainly did not enable us to comprehend any one of the divine attributes; but he brought them all nearer to us; he made such an exhibition of

them as was best adapted to our imperfect faculties. Under the veil of human flesh he shewed us the Godhead ; he shewed it in its awful attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence throughout space and time. At his command the laws of nature were suspended, and miracles were wrought—for God is omnipotent. He penetrated the secret thoughts of the disciple or the Pharisee—for God is omniscient. Though far away beyond Jordan, he saw his friend Lazarus fall asleep—for God is present everywhere. He foretold the things which should befall himself, his disciples, and the holy city—for to God all time is present. In like manner he shewed forth the divine nature in its attributes of righteousness, and holiness, and love. And, that we might not yearn after any further or fuller manifestation of the Godhead, he declared, “ He that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; ” “ I and the Father are one.” Until he came, there had been seen no more than the skirt as it were of the divine glory passing by. In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him it was revealed.

2. In like manner it is beyond a doubt, that a sense of the distinction between right and wrong, between moral good and evil, has

existed in every age and nation of the world. Amidst the ever-changing opinions and conventions of men, there is a law, as the heathen poet has confessed¹, which is not a thing of to-day or yesterday, but eternal, already present to the consciences of men, before it had been sanctioned by the policy of statesmen, or discovered by the reasonings of philosophers. That law is universal; and every man is bound to obey its decrees, and he has within himself a tribunal, by which that law is proclaimed, and before which he is liable to be arraigned and judged; his thoughts, as the apostle² describes it, “accusing or else excusing one another.” This tribunal is supreme, and can never be overthrown; for it speaks with the voice of God, it is the representative of the Majesty on high. Its authority truly is paramount; but its power is not in proportion to its authority; it does not, it cannot compel obedience. Men are left at liberty to slight its ordinances and disregard its decisions; and they have not been backward to avail themselves of this dangerous liberty. They have wilfully re-

¹ Soph. *Antig.* 456 :

Οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε καὶ χθὲς, ἀλλ’ αἰεί ποτε
 ζῆ ταῦτα, κούδεις οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου φάνη.

² Rom. ii. 15. See Bishop Butler, Sermon II.

fused to follow their best and safest guide. There is not a dictate of conscience which they have not disobeyed, not a vice which they have not deliberately approved. When Christ came, men had well nigh ceased to regard those internal impulses, which are ever prompting us to good, and restraining us from evil. Conscience indeed still uttered her lively oracles, but uttered them in vain; for the world was dead in trespasses and sins. It was part of Christ's mission upon earth to restore her dominion in the heart, to support her authority, and dispose men to obey her. He executed this part of his work not merely by delivering a variety of moral precepts, exactly consonant with the dictates of conscience; but since men are more moved by example than by precept, by what they see than by what they hear, he illustrated his doctrine, he made it more persuasive and irresistible, by the perfect pattern of his life. And this doctrine, with his life and death for its commentary, he placed on record, not entrusting it to the precarious custody of tradition, but prompting holy men to write it for our learning. So that we have for our guidance all that the heathen possessed, namely, a law unwritten, shining in the heart; and we have what was not vouchsafed to

them, a copy of that same law written by divine authority, and illustrated by a divine example.

3. Again, almost all the heathen nations agree in the practice of offering some kind of sacrifice to the deities which they worship. When we go back to early times, the origin of this practice becomes apparent. It took its rise from the sense of guilt, from the consciousness that mankind had incurred the divine wrath, that there was an estrangement between God and man, and that this estrangement could only be done away, and a reconciliation effected, by means of an expiation. Thus the sacrificial rites and ceremonies had their origin in a great and awful truth. Hence it was that men were led to offer up the spotless heifer, the firstlings of the flock, the costly hecatomb; hence too they imagined that even the blood of their fellow-men, even the lives of their own children, would be acceptable gifts to the ruthless objects of their worship. The gulph which separates the holiness of God from the wickedness of man, they did not wholly overlook; and they sought to fill it up by casting into it their best-beloved and rarest treasures. Yet the breach only grew wider; it took more than all this to ransom their souls. An offer-

ing was required more precious than any which they had to give. But these ineffectual offerings were continued, long after the real intention of them had been forgotten. At the utmost, they were only an acknowledgement on the part of the worshipper that he needed an atonement. But they ceased to be even this. Men worshipped they knew not what; and they sacrificed they knew not why. That which had been a true token, and full of meaning, became a lifeless ceremony, a superstitious observance, an abominable thing. Then Christ came, and engraved afresh upon the hearts of men the truth which had been so nearly effaced. The world was again convinced of sin; convinced more deeply than it had ever been before. The need of a reconciliation was more clearly shewn. The ancient sacrifices were abolished. Symbols they were shewn to be, and only symbols, of the great propitiation. The question for ages had been, "who shall provide a lamb for the sacrifice?" that question was now answered once for all. What the blood of bulls and goats could never accomplish, was now completed in a wonderful and unexpected manner. There had been individuals who laid down their lives for the preservation of their friends or their country. But who could expect that

one would be found to give himself up to death for the salvation of his *enemies*, those enemies being the whole race of mankind? There had been parents who sacrificed their children, to save themselves; thus giving the fruit of their body for the sin of their souls; but it never entered into the heart of man to conceive that God would give his only-begotten Son, to be a ransom for those sins which had been committed against himself.

Thus it appears that these three principles, the belief in one supreme and infinite God; the sense of moral good and evil; and the conviction that an atonement was required for sin—were originally implanted in human nature; and that, after having been subject to grievous corruptions and mutilations, they were finally revived and restored by Christ. But it is obvious that these principles would have been placed in us to little purpose, if they had not been associated with another, which gave strength to each and harmony to all; I mean, the persuasion of a future state of rewards and punishments. If this principle were absent from the mind, to what end were the others there? What practical effect could arise from the belief in a Supreme Being, if there was no expectation of meeting him hereafter face to face, and seeing him as he is?

The only philosophers¹ who denied the necessity of worshipping the gods, denied also the future existence of the soul. And they were consistent in their scepticism; the one negation is implied in the other. Whence also the earnest desire to be at one with God, if not from a fear lest the present alienation should be prolonged and aggravated after death? It is said to have been² a dying philosopher's last request, that a sacrifice which he had vowed to one of the gods should be fulfilled. Whether this incident really occurred or not, it is at least the expression of a truth. It tells us that the ancient sacrifices were not intended merely to avert the anger of the gods during this life, but that they had reference to something beyond the grave. It was felt to be necessary, even for the dying man, that the vows which he had promised should be paid. Or again, is it likely that the moral law would have been inscribed on men's hearts, without any intimation of the penalties by which it will hereafter be vindicated? Would men have submitted to all manner of losses and reproaches, and even to death itself, as we know they sometimes did, for conscience' sake, if con-

¹ The Epicureans.

² τῷ Ἀσκληπείῳ ὀφείλομεν ἀλέκτρωνα. κ. τ. λ.—Plat.
Phæd. ad fin.

science had been unable to encourage them with the prospect of an exceeding great reward? And supposing that some few men might even have done this, and, without any suspicion of a future life, had yet found by their own experience that virtue was its own reward, notwithstanding the mishaps and privations to which they were exposed in the pursuit of it; yet the hardened sinner, who had had no such experience, and had gone on in a career of successful villany, would easily stifle the voice of conscience, or at least would easily endure it, if he were not also haunted by the apprehension of a future reckoning before the Judge Eternal. Without that apprehension, life would be disturbed by no remorse, and death would not be invested with half his terrors.

If then there is such a thing as Natural or Unwritten Religion, which we cannot doubt there is; if men have always believed in a God, and had a knowledge of his moral law, and yearned for reconciliation with him, they must have had also a belief in a future retribution.

That belief is evidently the key-stone by which the whole fabric of religion is held together, and without which, so far as we can see, no real and practical fear of God would subsist in the world. And we are therefore

led to infer, from the considerations which have now been adduced, that it must have been an element in the ancient faith of mankind, a part of what is called the Religion of Nature. It is my intention, in the course of Lectures upon which I am now entering, to enlarge upon this subject; to shew that a future retribution has, as a matter of fact, been generally expected by the heathen world; to enquire how far that expectation was affected, whether it was strengthened or impaired, by the operations of the human reason; to ascertain in what sense and in what manner life and immortality were brought to light through the Gospel; to observe how, after the lapse of so many ages, the doctrine of a future life, as it was fixed by Christ, has come down to us, not indeed unassaulted, but uninjured, and is still a great article of our faith, and a principal motive of our conduct.

Such a review of such a subject is not to be approached, especially in such a place as this house of God, with the mere spirit of curiosity and criticism. Lessons of religious import will present themselves to us on every side, if we only hold ourselves ready to observe them. It will be cheering to behold human nature, in its greatest desolation, still clinging to the hope of an immortal destiny, and look-

ing wistfully into heaven, and straining its eyes to penetrate futurity by the fading light of traditional Revelation. It will be a solemn and humiliating lesson to observe how human nature, in its highest intellectual development, disdained the assistance of Religion, and endeavoured to be a light to itself. But, above all, we shall from time to time recur, as to a great central object, to the Resurrection of our Lord. It is that event alone which gives reality and interest to the speculations of the ancient world. If Christ had not risen, the persuasion of a future life, however strong and universal, might have been treated as a vain thing. If the Christian revelation had confirmed the existing religious belief of men in other particulars, but had not confirmed it in this, then the others would have stood fast, and this would have fallen to the ground. But now is Christ risen; and the anticipations, which have been verified and confirmed by his resurrection, cannot be treated as an insignificant fact in the history of mankind. They must be referred to a divine origin. They shew us the Spirit of God moving as it were on the face of the waters, before God had said, "Let there be light."

We shall of necessity encounter, as we proceed, some of the phantoms of superstition,

and the dreams of false philosophy ; but even these may become instructive and valuable, when they are placed side by side with the realities of Revelation. After viewing the thralldom from which we have escaped, we shall rejoice the more at the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. When we see how the men of other times made shipwreck of their souls by rejecting the ancient faith, and consulting their own reason, we shall be the more disposed to look with suspicion on the deductions of human reason, and to hold fast and without wavering the faith which we ourselves profess.

We speak of the *faith* which we profess : the very name of faith suggests to us an important difference between our own condition and that of the heathen world. The word was not used by them, as we use it, in reference to religious matters ; and the thing itself can only be attributed to them in a very limited degree. The religious sense which they possessed, if faith it is to be called, was rather a blind instinct than an intelligent principle. It existed, but it shewed few signs of life, except so far as it was roused to a false and feverish energy, and made to believe a lie, by the influence of some strong delusion. For though

concerned about the most divine and momentous subjects, it was more easily imposed upon than any other element of our nature. Before then we proceed to compare the heathen notions of a future life with the Christian doctrine, it appears necessary to observe in what manner an impulse has been given by our holy Religion to the great principle of faith; and to this end we shall now take up a few of the considerations which are involved in the words of my text, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

We have seen that Christ came partly to republish a former Revelation, and partly to proclaim a new one. But to attain these objects, and to impress his teaching permanently on mankind, what course did he pursue? Did he merely promulgate certain doctrines, to be received as articles of religion, and exhibit such miracles as would suffice to prove that he was verily a teacher sent from God? If this had been all, is it not probable, human nature remaining the same, that the Christian Dispensation would have been speedily effaced from the memories and hearts of men, just as we know that the Mosaic Revelation soon came to be unheeded by the people to which it was addressed, and the Religion of Nature was disregarded by man-

kind in general? On the other hand, did he accompany his teaching with such irresistible power that the acceptance of the gospel was an inevitable consequence of hearing it? Had he done this, human nature would have been essentially changed, the freedom of the will being in fact extinguished. He did not in any way change the nature of man; but he supplied a special aid to its various infirmities. And one of its chief infirmities, one which involved many others was this, that the principle of faith had become lifeless. That power of the mind, or I should rather say of the heart of man, by which he is lifted up above the things which surround him, and enabled to apprehend the things of the unseen world, from long disuse and neglect had well-nigh lost its vitality. Christ gave it new life and strength. To awaken its energies, and prevent them from again becoming dormant, was one great end not only of the miracles and discourses of our Lord, but of his entire life and ministry. This purpose is clearly marked in every part of the Christian Dispensation; in its matter and in its form, in its general aspect and in its particular details.

Until Christ came, the faith of mankind (the Jewish people of course being excepted)

had had no objects upon which to exercise itself, besides a few cardinal truths, which were in themselves of the highest concernment, but which were seen dim and distorted through the mists of superstition. In endeavouring to grasp and retain these truths, men called in their imagination to the aid of their faith. Thus the divine truths were either lost altogether, or else were only preserved after they had been embodied in such fantastic and unworthy forms, as disguised their beauty, and polluted their purity. They came to be regarded no longer as objects of faith, but as creatures of the imagination. But in the fulfilment of his mission upon earth, Christ afforded to human faith a real object upon which to rest, a visible sensible fact, the history of his own life. Faith had heretofore been bewildered by abstract truths which it could not realize, or cheated by monstrous falsehoods, which were of human invention. But now it reposes securely on a real person. Now we know him in whom we have believed. In him were embodied all the attributes of the Godhead. But though they assumed the garb of human flesh, they contracted no carnal defilement; they lost none of their essential majesty. The same Being who is one of ourselves, the first-born of many

brethren, was also in the beginning with God, and was God.

It was one of the effects of his incarnation, to bring down divine truth more nearly to the level of our humble capacities. And that it was also the intention of his ministry to support and elevate our weak and tottering faith, we have ample proof, without going out of the chapter from which the text is taken.

1. That chapter tells us¹ first, how he took three of his Apostles into a high mountain apart, and was there transfigured before them, and appeared in his glory, conversing with Moses and Elias. Surely it was to exalt and purify the faith of Peter, and James, and John, that he permitted them to be his companions on that occasion; and surely what they then witnessed was not a little instrumental in preparing those three Apostles for the prominent place afterwards allotted to them in their Master's service. And be it remembered, that as he then appeared unto them conversing with Moses and Elias in his glory, so we also are invited even now to behold the glory of the only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth, and to see how Moses and Elias and all the prophets are associated and united with him. To the eye of faith they

¹ Mark ix. 2.

appear marching along as it were in a stately procession, in which he is the last and principal personage; they prefiguring and foreshadowing him, and he ever pointing to them and declaring that he was come to fulfil those things which they had predicted. Thus is our faith, like that of the Apostles, strengthened and exalted, by beholding him in conjunction with Moses and the prophets.

2. Again, when he was come down from the Mount of the Transfiguration¹, he found that the disciples whom he left below had been attempting to cast out a devil, and had been unsuccessful. This temporary withdrawal from them had tried their faith; and it had been found wanting. When they enquired the cause of their failure, he told them it was because of their unbelief; and he shewed how that unbelief was to be overcome; “this kind goeth not forth,” he said, “but with prayer and fasting.” The case of those disciples in a certain sense is our case also; and the admonition which they received is addressed to all of us. For we too are for a little time separated from our Lord, and left here below, while he is gone up to his glory; we too, during the interval, are exposed to dangerous trials of our faith. We learn from

¹ Mark ix. 14.

this transaction, that if we would vanquish the powers of evil by which we are surrounded in the world, we must begin by dislodging them from our own souls ; and this we are to do by the means which the Saviour summed up in two words, namely by prayer and fasting. When we have accustomed ourselves to commune frequently with God, to conceal nothing from him, to confide entirely in him ; when by habitual self-denial and many searchings of heart and careful vigilance over ourselves, we have brought our unruly members into subjection to the law of Christ ; then we shall have obtained the faith which will enable us to go forth conquering and to conquer ; we shall be in possession of the means for gaining that victory which overcometh the world. But until we are ourselves humbled and disciplined and subdued, we are not strong enough to wrestle with principalities and powers ; we shall wage an unequal warfare with the ruler of the darkness of this world, so long as he has a stronghold in our own bosoms.

3. But let us turn once more to the chapter which is before us. We read that while the disciples were thus wavering, there was one, the father of the afflicted child, whose faith, though far from perfect, yet had not

altogether failed. When our Lord said to him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;" his answer immediately was, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." The appeal was not made in vain. That faith, imperfect as it confessedly was, prevailed. The unbelief was no sooner confessed than it was removed. The wished-for miracle was wrought; the devil was cast out. This narrative also we may apply to ourselves. It tells us of a third method, by which our faith may be strengthened. For when we have meditated ever so much upon the history of our Lord, and compared it with the types of the law and the visions of the prophets, and seen how he agrees with Moses and Elias; when we have done all in our power to draw near to God in prayer, and to mortify our own corrupt inclinations; after all this we still find that the evil heart of unbelief remains in us, that we cannot entirely cleave unto Christ. What then, does he reject our faith, because it is only as a grain of mustard-seed? On the contrary, he helps our unbelief, he assists our imperfect efforts, and renders them availing. He does not quench the smoking flax, but kindles it afresh; and especially he does this by putting into our hearts the influence of his Holy

Spirit, whereby we are made more ardent in our love, more stedfast in our confidence.

We have found, therefore, in this single chapter, three cases of individuals, whose faith, in different ways, was the object of Christ's care and solicitude. And these three cases, as we have seen, may represent to us the several means by which his disciples generally are strengthened in their faith. First, we see how, in concert with Moses and the Prophets, he has accomplished the whole counsel of God; secondly, we are invited to draw near to him by prayer and self-denial; thirdly, our infirmities are removed, and we are made sufficient for all things, by his grace preventing us. And these particular cases, as well as the whole tenor of his ministry, must convince us, that while he came to republish the primitive Revelation, and to found a new one upon it, it was also his object to enable us better to apprehend his doctrines. And this he did partly by bringing down the divine truth more nearly to the level of our capacities, and partly by adopting various methods to exalt and purify and increase our faith.

We shall hereafter see how he assisted the unbelief of mankind, touching a matter of the utmost concern, the doctrine of a future state. And if, as we go along, we become conscious

of any remnant of unbelief in our own hearts, may we confess it before him, and may it be his good pleasure to cast it out, by the influence of his Holy Spirit. And to this end let us diligently enquire within ourselves what manner of spirit we are of, and what is the source of our unbelief; whether it proceeds from neglect of the facts and evidences of our holy Religion, from failing to observe, as we are invited to do, and as we ought to do, the glory of the Godhead revealed in Christ, and how he and Moses and Elias talk and agree together in a wonderful harmony; or whether it is because we have let our carnal lusts have dominion over our soul, instead of resorting to prayer and self-denial, the means prescribed by Christ, and the only means, whereby the powers of evil may be subdued; or does our unbelief consist in the want of earnestness and singleness of heart; an indisposition to throw ourselves entirely upon Christ? Do we find that when we are in the act of trusting in him, unbelief is present with us, making us hesitate, and draw back? In this case it is certain, that if we duly seek his help he will not fail to grant it; that he will lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.

But whether we require the lesson which

was taught on the Mount of Transfiguration, or those which were inculcated at its foot—and surely we have all of us some need of those lessons—may we have learned before the now-approaching Easter is come and gone, to look more intently than we ever yet have done on our immortal destiny ; to meditate, as we best can, on those good things which pass man's understanding, which the death of Christ has purchased for us, and which by his resurrection are assured to us : and let us not shut our eyes to the alternative which awaits us if we neglect so great a salvation. May we, with strong forecast of mind, anticipate the future judgment ; and our hopes and fears being duly aroused by the contemplation, may we return to the things of this present world better able to estimate them at their true value ; not overrating them, nor yet despising them ; not allowing our hearts to cleave to them and doat upon them, but so receiving them, so using them, and, when the time comes, so parting with them, that they may be what they are intended to be, a preparation for the things eternal.

LECTURE II.

THE POPULAR NOTIONS OF THE HEATHEN WORLD CONCERNING A FUTURE STATE.

2 PETER I. 19.

*A light that shineth in a dark place, until the
day dawn.*

THE event which we celebrate to-day¹, the manifestation of Christ as the firstfruits of them that slept, has undoubtedly wrought a great change in the expectations of mankind with regard to a future state. If our minds are duly impressed by the memory of that event, if we cherish it and rejoice in it as we ought, it will be impossible for us to place ourselves in the position of the heathen, and to return to their beggarly elements. Our faith is removed from theirs not only in degree, but in kind. We cannot, if we would, enter into their views, and sympathize with their ignorance. Things which to them appeared to be realities and full of life, are seen by us to have been shadows and mockeries. We wonder how they could have been be-

¹ Easter Day.

guiled by fictions, which to us are so repulsive and degrading. But though we cannot reconstruct their system, nor breathe into it the fitful life which once perhaps it had, we shall find our account in gathering up some few of its fragments, as they will assist us to form a more definite idea of the blessings which we have derived from our high calling as Christians. In a former discourse I stated the reasons which make it likely that the doctrine of a future retribution existed from the beginning, and combined with other principles to form what is called the Natural Religion of mankind. Certainly it is not easy to conceive that without the aid of that doctrine any religion worthy of the name, any practical fear of God, could have subsisted in the world. We shall now proceed to shew that the belief in a future state of rewards and punishments did actually prevail before the coming of our Lord ; although, like other Divine truths, it was embodied by the perverse ingenuity of man in a variety of shapes, mixed up with much that was false and degrading, and so deprived of the influence which it was well calculated to exert on the conduct and characters of men.

A train of meditation might indeed be found more in unison with the joyous spirit

which an Easter-day awakens in our hearts. It may seem out of season to retire into the dark places of heathenism, when we should be contemplating the Sun of Righteousness, freshly risen with healing in his wings, never to set or be obscured any more. But as the contrast which we are about to trace is instructive, and tends to the confirmation of the faith, so it will also heighten the joy from which it diverts us for a moment. They who have passed suddenly from the broad daylight into some deep and gloomy cavern, well know how great is the delight of bursting again into the summer sunshine; how the sky appears more bright, the landscape richer and more lovely than before. This I trust will be our case, when we have gone through the region upon which we are now about to enter. That region however is not one of total darkness; a twilight was shed upon it, until the day should dawn. The words of the Apostle in my text have reference to the Jewish prophecies, which he describes as “a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in the heart.” But the same words are applicable to the glimmering light of Natural Religion, which “lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” One element of that light, as we are

now about to see, was the belief in a future retribution.

In ascertaining the views of the heathen world¹ upon this subject, it is important to distinguish clearly between the popular belief and the speculations of philosophers. Unless this distinction be kept in view, we are in danger of falling into some considerable errors, and of overlooking some valuable lessons. I shall at present only treat of the *popular belief* of mankind, leaving the guesses of the wise, which had but little in common with it, to be considered on a future occasion.

That the persuasion of a future life has prevailed generally both among civilised and savage nations, I need hardly say is no new assertion. The fact was not only observed by the great philosopher of ancient Rome, but it was effectively employed by him as an evidence in favour of the immortality of the soul. What is universally believed, he argues, we may presume to be true. In the time of Cicero, however, only a comparatively small part of the world had been explored; and his induction was founded upon what we should

¹ In this and the succeeding Lecture it is to be understood that the peculiar and exceptional case of the Jewish people is not taken into consideration.

now consider insufficient grounds. Nations existed unknown to him, and religious systems with the doctrines of which he was not acquainted. But the fact which he rather asserted than proved, has been confirmed by modern discoveries; and Christian Divines, though in possession of far stronger evidence of a future life, have not thought it unbecoming to point out this fact, and to insist upon the argument which results from it. Indeed the argument may now be advanced further than it was carried in former times. For we are in a position to shew, not only that *a future life* was universally anticipated, but that the belief in *a future retribution* was almost equally universal; that the rewards and punishments of another world entered into the popular belief in some shape or other, and with more or less distinctness. It is with an especial reference to this point, namely, to the belief in a future retribution, that I now propose to survey rapidly the opinions of the heathen world.

¹And first our thoughts recur to those ancient nations with whose customs and civilisation we are most familiar. I need scarcely remind you of the form in which the doctrine

¹ For proofs and illustrations of the statements which follow, see Note at the end of this Lecture.

was held by the Greeks, of the large space which it occupied in their mythology; of their deification of departed heroes; of the minute detail in which the punishments of the wicked and the rewards of the virtuous were represented; how the doctrine was enlarged upon by that class of writers which we may take to reflect most correctly the national mind, namely by the poets; how it was the principal subject of instruction in the mysteries, such as those of Eleusis, which were resorted to not merely by a few individuals, but by a large proportion of the people. If it be said that a great part of the mythology was the invention of poets, and that the mysteries were of comparatively late introduction, imported from another country; this indeed may be admitted to have been the case; but it must also be allowed, on the other hand, that neither the fictions of poets nor the institutions of other nations would have met with such general acceptance and adoption, had they not been in accordance with an already prevailing belief. To shew that this belief existed from the earliest times, we have only to appeal to the most ancient monuments of Greek literature. The Homeric poems speak of the future world, not as if it were then for the first time held up to

view, but as though it were a familiar topic, an acquaintance with which might be taken for granted. Allusion is made to the vengeance which in that world should overtake the perjurer; and a glowing description is given of those blessed abodes which awaited the departed hero.

With regard to the popular notions of the Romans, it is well known that they agreed very nearly with those to which I have just alluded. Much of their language on this subject, and many of their fables, were borrowed by the poets of one nation from the mythology of the other. But it would be an error to suppose that the belief in a future retribution, or indeed any other great and practical principle, passed over from Greece to Italy together with the models of literature and art. This belief, as was confessed even by those who rejected it, was far too deeply seated in the popular mind to have had any such recent and adventitious origin. It may be traced among the ancient legends of Rome, it is found, though in a gloomy and forbidding shape, upon the sculptured sepulchres of the Etruscans.

Let us, however, leave these classic lands, and go back to the seats of an elder civilization. How wonderful are the monuments of

Egypt!—how strange are her records!—how many problems connected with her history still remain to exercise the ingenuity of man! If there is any point, however, which is firmly established by the concurrent testimony of ancient history and modern research, it is this, that the belief in a future state of rewards and punishments has existed in that country from very early times. The pictures are still extant which represent the divine judge sitting on his throne, and the souls of men literally weighed¹ in the balance before his face. They whose good deeds preponderate are at once received into happiness, but they whose souls are light in the scales, are seen returning to earth, destined to expiate their sins in the form of some loathsome animal.

It was partly as a symbol of that judgment, and partly in anticipation of it, that the same remarkable people were accustomed to hold a trial over the body of the dead. Before the funeral rites were permitted to take place, a solemn court was held, and inquiry made touching the character and actions of the deceased; and if such heavy accusations

¹ Some Christian artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries treated the subject of the last judgment in a similar manner; the souls being weighed in scales held by St Michael the Archangel. See Mrs Jameson's *Legendary Art*, i. 78.

were brought against him, that it appeared likely his soul would be condemned in the other world, the body was treated with indignity, and not allowed to receive the customary rites of burial.

If from Egypt we turn to India, we find the belief in a future state exercising in ancient as in modern times a strong influence on all the votaries of the religion of Brahma. According to their view, the recompense of the righteous will consist in being blended with the divine essence, while it will be the punishment of the wicked to revisit this lower world, which we Christians regard as a scene of trial and probation for the future; but which the Hindoos imagine to be a place of torture and retribution for sins committed in a former life. It is by them considered meritorious to separate the mind from the affairs and affections of this world, and to devote its faculties entirely to the contemplation of the Deity; while the body is chastised with self-inflicted scourgings and macerations. It would be hard to say whether the mental or the bodily discipline is the most unnatural—the most contrary to the spirit of true religion.

We might proceed to trace the belief in a future retribution throughout the rest of Asia, and to shew that it was held, with va-

rious modifications, in Syria, and Persia, and Burmah, and China, by them that bowed the knee to Baal, by the worshippers of fire, by the disciples of Buddha, and by the slaves of Juggernaut. But it is unnecessary to dwell upon these matters in detail. Nor need I do more than remind you of the persuasion which animated the barbarous inhabitants of Northern Europe, the nations of Scandinavia, and Germany, and Gaul, and Britain. In their view, future bliss was to be won by far other means, and was to consist in very different enjoyments, from those which were contemplated by the languid Orientals. By them not mental contemplation but physical energy was esteemed the highest virtue. They attributed to their gods the same passion for bloodshed, the same gross appetites, by which they were themselves inflamed; and the recompense of an eternal feast was held out to the warrior who should lose his life on the field of battle.

It still remains to enquire whether the same notion has extended to the inhabitants of that great continent which has been opened to us in modern times. The question may be simply answered. We learn from unimpeachable testimonies, that the belief in a future state of rewards and punishments has

been held by all the barbarous tribes of North America, as well as by the more civilised nations which in ancient times inhabited the centre and the South. The wild Indians of the North still believe that the wicked will be sent hereafter to regions of eternal snow, while the good will taste every physical enjoyment beneath a warm and genial sky. The ancient Mexicans imagined that the future punishment would consist in the privation of light; while it would be the privilege of the virtuous to accompany the Sun in his bright career through the heavens. The natives of Peru not only indulged in anticipations of the same kind, but are even said to have had some surmise of the resurrection of the body.

Thus the new world is shewn to be in harmony with the old upon this most vital question, and an important link is added to the chain of evidence, by which the belief in a future state is shewn to be a principle of Natural Religion.

It cannot indeed be maintained that there is absolutely no evidence on the other side. A savage tribe may here and there have fallen into so degraded a condition, as to retain scarcely any idea of a God, and none at all of a life beyond the grave. And nations may

be found in a higher stage of civilisation, which have taken a one-sided view of the future world, either regarding it altogether as a place of torment (as apparently did the ancient Etruscans), or as an abode from which all sorrow will be excluded (which is said to be the notion of some of the tribes of Africa). Nor is it pretended that those who held the doctrine most fully and distinctly, were always consistent with themselves, that they never allowed the language of doubt and uncertainty to escape them—never spoke as if this world was all in all to them, as if death was to be the extinction of all hope and fear. But still, after making all due allowance for the weight of such observations, the conclusion remains irresistible, that there is a general consent of mankind touching a future state of retribution. We are justified in saying that mankind in general is not content with this narrow scene, but is looking forward to a wider sphere of existence, anticipating a future destiny, which will exceed either in happiness or misery all that is experienced here. It is felt that the issues of futurity depend on the right use or the abuse of this present time. And our present survey, brief and imperfect as it is, enables us to refer this universal sentiment to its real source. We shall not say,

as has been maintained by some¹, that it was the cunning invention of statesmen and philosophers, desirous of restraining the vices and the passions of the multitude by what might be considered a pardonable deception ; for we have found it where the policy of statesmen and the wisdom of philosophers has never reached ; we have seen it among barbarous and uncultivated tribes, no less distinctly than in the most refined and artificial communities. Nor was it entertained only as an opinion, or a wish, as some² have been content to describe it. It must be placed higher than this. We are compelled to recognise in it an active principle, exercising, at least in some cases, a positive influence over the actions of men, and leading them to sacrifice the present to the future in a manner which shews clearly that they regard the future as a reality. Finding this belief to be a universal principle, and active for good or evil, according as it is used well or abused, we cannot regard it as an accident of our nature, as the offspring of this or that human intellect, engendered by human cunning or human credulity, or taking its rise from the yearnings and aspirations of our fallen race. We can only

¹ *E.g.* by Polybius and Bishop Warburton.

² *E.g.* (as it seems) Cicero.

ascribe it to a divine Author; and esteem it part of that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; part, that is to say, of the witness which God gave of himself at the beginning; part, of our religious instinct; part, if we will so call it, of Natural Revelation. Whether it were revealed once for all, and handed down traditionally from generation to generation; or whether it be innate and implanted in every individual, we need not now enquire. If it be conceded that the light exists, we ask not the mode in which God commanded it to be.

But though the light was from above, pure and simple in its origin, it was stained and discoloured in various ways as it passed through the impure medium of human nature. Very unworthy at all times, and sometimes very gross, were the conceptions which men formed of a future state. In most cases their ideas of future happiness were suggested by the occupations, the pleasures, and the passions of this present life. In like manner the torments of the wicked were to consist of the physical evils which are experienced here. Though it was the soul alone which was to survive the stroke of death, the punishment was to be such as could be felt only in the body. The undying pangs of remorse were not taken into

account, nor the desolation which will reign in the soul when hope shall have fled for ever.

That the future life occupied a large share of men's thoughts, we are justified in concluding, from the copious imagery with which they decked it out, and from the various speculations in which they indulged as to its employments, its vicissitudes, and its duration. There is one of those speculations, and only one, which may seem to deserve notice here—and that on account of its prevalence in a great part of the world; I mean the doctrine of the transmigration of souls—the notion that the soul returns to earth, either in a human body, or in the shape of some inferior animal. This doctrine may have been received in some countries only as a philosophical tenet; for instance, in Greece, Italy, and Gaul; but it was a popular belief most probably in Egypt, and certainly throughout a great part of Asia, especially in India; for there it has given rise to certain superstitious practices, which continue to this day. It was supposed that the soul expiated its sins in one or more successive stages of existence, and after purifying itself, like silver seven times refined, from the dross of human infirmity, became fitted at last for a divine and immortal destiny. It is instruc-

tive to mark the origin of this doctrine. Men were sensible that they had need of some purification before they could approach the throne of God, and be reconciled to him. But the taint of sin was cleaving to their soul, and they felt that it would cleave to them still, after they had quitted their earthly tabernacle. When they looked around they saw none to help them, none to make expiation for them. Yet an expiation must be made. Thus far their notions were correct; but at this point their light failed them, and the rest they imagined for themselves, with such success as attends all the imaginations of men respecting the mysteries of religion. They fondly supposed, that the purification which they could not effect now, they should have the means of accomplishing hereafter; that though now they could not refrain from wallowing in the mire, in another world they should find a place where they might wash and be clean; and that afterwards they should be fit to enter into the presence of God.

Such was the delusion with which men flattered themselves, oppressed as they were with the consciousness of guilt. Such was the only escape which they could devise from what they foresaw to be the just and necessary consequence of sin. We cannot tell where

this doctrine of purgatory, for by that name it may not inaptly be termed, first had its origin. It was from Egypt that it passed over into Europe, spreading through Italy and Greece and Gaul; and many ages afterwards it was again from Egypt that Europe received another purgatory—another at least in form, but the same in substance and in principle—which has been equally wide in its influence, and far more mischievous in its effects. The doctrine, that souls would undergo purgation in an intermediate state, was perpetuated in Egypt from age to age; it was adopted by the disciples of Plato, and taught by them in the philosophical schools of Alexandria; it infected the Christian divines of that place in the third century of our era, and through them it was propagated in a great part of the Christian world. A doctrine it was of Pagan origin, not recognised by the Word of God, but agreeable to the depravity of human nature, and therefore readily received without question or examination—a doctrine pernicious in itself, and destined to be the parent of practical abuses still more deadly to the faith¹.

We have now seen reason to conclude that the belief in a future retribution is a principle

¹ This subject is resumed in Lecture VIII.

of universal prevalence and of divine origin ; and enough has been said to remind us that this principle did not escape the general corruption of our nature. The futurity which men anticipated was made to square with the suggestions of their bodily appetites and passions, with their grovelling ideas of the divine nature, with their sordid and partial conceptions of moral good and evil. It remains to be seen what influence this belief, such as it was, exercised over the conduct and actions of men.

We cannot say that it has been altogether ineffectual as a motive of action, when we remember the fanaticism to which it has given rise in a large portion of our race, among the votaries of the Brahminical and Buddhist superstitions. Those misguided men expect to gain the things eternal not by passing through the things temporal, but by avoiding them, by despising and abhorring them : by torturing the body they hope to secure the happiness of the soul. Such a system indeed cannot be carried very far in practice, being contrary to nature ; but so far as it is operative, it tends to paralyse all energy and activity of mind and body ; it plucks up indiscriminately the vices and the virtues of the soul, it degrades the body into

an instrument of self-torture. The noble but erring qualities of our nature it does not attempt to school and discipline, till they be brought back into conformity with the will of God, in whose image they were at first created ; but it seeks to tread under foot and eradicate those powers and qualities, as being altogether and essentially evil. It declares to its devotee, that by ceasing to be man, he may make himself God.

With the exception of that large family of mankind to which I have now alluded, we have no proof that the belief in a future state had much effect on the practice of the heathen. Let us turn again to those ancient nations into whose character and customs we have obtained the closest insight ; an insight so close and minute, that if this motive existed in any force, we should not fail to discover it. I do not say that they were insensible of the influence which such a motive ought to exert. They knew it, but they hardened their hearts against it. The ancient poet of Greece spoke of the vengeance which in another world should overtake the perjurer. Yet we cannot find that any heavier sanction was attached to judicial oaths, either by those who imposed or by those who took them, than the punishments of human justice and

the temporal wrath of the gods. The happiness of a future world might be chanted in the funeral procession, in strains almost worthy of the Christian muse¹; but we have no proof that these strains found any echo in the hearts of the mourners; no proof that either public or private grief was assuaged by such considerations. The poet² might conceive of one who, in the presence of a great and dire emergency, would balance the eternal interests of the future world against the fleeting concerns of this, and choose the better part; but such struggles and resolves are to be found only in the region of poetry. They do not seem to have had any place among the realities of life. Men might sometimes do a pure and virtuous deed for the sake of their friends or their country, or even for the sake of conscience, or to secure the temporal favour of the gods. But we have yet to discover that they did so for the sake

¹ I allude chiefly to the beautiful fragments of Pindar's dirge-songs (Threni).

² Soph. *Antig.* 74:

ἐπεὶ πλείων χρόνος
ὄν δει μ' ἀρέσκειν τοῖς κάτω τῶν ἐνθάδε.
ἐκεῖ γὰρ αἰεὶ κείσομαι.

Above the fleeting loves of earth I prize
The lasting friendships of the lower world;
For my eternal resting-place is there.

of their immortal souls. Such was the practical indifference of men to a doctrine which they acknowledged to be true ; and which, if true, was of infinite importance. Is there anything surprising in this ; anything unheard of in Christian times ? or must we not acknowledge that even now, when heaven has been opened to our eyes, our evil passions and worldly thoughts have chained us down to earth ? do we not set our hearts on the objects which lie around us, instead of looking to those distant hills from whence cometh our salvation ?

There is no reason to think that the examples which I have now taken, the one from the Eastern, the other from the Western world, to illustrate the practical effect of the belief in a future state, are unfavourable specimens. That principle was either turned to a bad purpose, as among the Eastern nations, or almost entirely neglected, as was the case in the Western part. And if it had no more effect than this, much need was there that a new light should be poured upon so important a subject ; much need that the simple truth should be shewn, free from the additions by which it was encumbered ; much need that its practical bearings should be ascertained, and enforced by a new authority.

Where was that authority to be found? was it anywhere “given among men?”

The brief and hasty review which has now been taken of Gentile belief and unbelief will not have been unprofitable, if it leads us to cast a serious thought upon ourselves and our own condition. We have seen how the awful truth of a future retribution, inherent as it is in the heart, and not to be eradicated, was nevertheless robbed of its simplicity, its majesty, and its power, by the perverse superstitions and imaginations of men. And have we received the doctrine in its purest form, substantially as it was published by him who is at once its Author and its Finisher? Great reason, then, have we to rejoice and be thankful for the truth, which as on this Easter-day was revealed afresh. Yet we have reason also to be on our guard, lest our imagination should tamper with our faith, lest the truth of God should again, through man’s device, be turned into a lie. No one can say that this is a visionary danger, seeing that the Christian Revelation has made no change in human nature. And no one who looks through the history of Christ’s Church will deny that the danger has actually occurred, that the true belief on this subject

has in some ages and countries been grievously corrupted. The doctrine of Purgatory, derived, as we have seen, from Pagan sources, is a great and lamentable instance of the corruptions to which I refer. If we have individually, and as a nation, been preserved from error, great reason have we on this Easter-day to rejoice, but to rejoice with trembling. If we see others err, we praise them not, we follow them not; but being ourselves fallible men, we judge them not.

Again, with regard to the practical influence of the belief in a future life, it has been shewn that the Gentiles both of the East and West were to blame in this respect, erring on opposite sides. The Orientals affected to have an aversion and contempt for this present world, the nations of Europe viewed the future with indifference. The former were carried away by fanaticism, the latter were chained down by a worldly spirit. Here then were two practical evils gnawing the very vitals of religion. The Christian Dispensation bruised their head, but did not destroy them. The Christian Dispensation united the East and West in the bonds of a common faith. But see how the folly of man laboured to convert even this blessing into a curse. The fanaticism of the East was imported into Europe,

and men were to be seen in every part of Christendom, under the various denominations of monks, ascetics, anchorites and hermits, renouncing the duties and the affections of social life, and endeavouring to pass their days in seclusion and quietism, in penance and mortification. Such efforts, however, were a violation of nature; and though for a time sustained by a false enthusiasm, it was impossible that they should have success. The folly was too monstrous to have many followers, and the practice of those who adopted it was often inconsistent with their professions. There was no danger that men in general would have too little regard for this life; there has been much more reason to fear lest they should think lightly of the next. To be intent on the things passing before our eyes, is a habit inseparable from our natural constitution: to withdraw our thoughts from them, is not one of the commands of our religion. On the contrary, we are taught that this life is of inestimable importance; that it has a value, which is not indeed intrinsic, but derived from its connexion with the world to come. In itself it is but a pilgrimage, but it brings us to our home. In itself it is a warfare, but its end is peace. In itself it is a thread, and a fragile one, but till it breaks eternity

is suspended from it. Can we say, any of us, that the relations between this life and the next are sufficiently present to our minds? Do they perceptibly and constantly influence our conduct and form our character? Does the consideration of them avail to restrain us in the hour of temptation, to exalt us in all time of our tribulation, to humble us in all time of our wealth, to assure us and make us steadfast amidst the failure of earthly hopes and the loss of human friends? If in the trials and emergencies of life we have received no support from the belief in a future world, what after all is our boasted faith? Where is our joy and peace in believing? What to us is the return of this Easter-day? Certainly we are in no condition to look scornfully on the superstitions of the Gentiles, to make a mock at their delusions, to affect horror at their unbelief. It may be that some of those Gentiles will rise up in the judgment and condemn us. But if we are able to give a good account of the hope that is in us, if we have really found it a present help in trouble, if in anticipation of the bodily resurrection we have already come out from the graves of our sins, and are in some sense risen with Christ; if we regard earthly things as the instruments by the right use of which trea-

sure may be laid up in heaven ; if we are conscious that we have laid up some treasure there, and that our heart is there ; if this be so, then indeed the lot is fallen to us in a fair ground, and we have a goodly heritage ; a heritage which we prize the more highly for the attempts which are made by the adversary of our souls to dislodge us. And as to those heathen nations, whose less-favoured condition has been under our notice to-day, we do not banish the hope, that there may be some among them, who having in this life sought after God, if haply they might find him, will hereafter find him, and will be received into his presence, and will be accounted worthy to be numbered with his faithful people, for the sake of our only Lord and Saviour.

NOTE ON LECTURE II.

THE following selection of authorities is intended to illustrate the statements made in the Lecture; it will enable the reader to see especially,

- (1) how universal has been the belief not merely in a future existence, but in a future retribution;
- (2) how widely (though not universally) the doctrine of transmigration has prevailed;
- (3) how curiously in some cases a peculiarity of national character, or of climate, has entered into the conceptions which have been formed of the future state.

I. The popular opinions and superstitions of the Greeks and Romans are too well known to require illustration. I only quote the two passages of Homer, to which reference has been made at p. 31. The first is *Il. γ. 279*, where the witnesses of an oath are said to be

Καὶ ποταμοὶ, καὶ γαῖα, καὶ οἱ ὑπένερθε καμόντας
Ἀνθρώπους τίνυθον, ὅστις κ' ἐπίορκον ὀμόσση.

The streams, the earth, and the avengers dread,
Who wait below upon the perjured dead.

The second is *Od. ιν. 563*, where Proteus says to Menelaus:

Ἀλλὰ σ' ἐς Ἡλύσιον πέδιον καὶ πείρατα γαίης
Ἀθάνατοι πέμψουσιν, ὅθι ξανθὸς Ῥαδάμανθος·
Τῇ περ ῥήϊστη βιοτὴ πέλει ἀνθρώποισιν·
Οὐ νιφετός, οὔτ' ἄρ' χειμῶν πολλὸς, οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρος,
Ἄλλ' αἰεὶ Ζεφύροιο λεγυπνείοντος αἴητας
Ὠκεανὸς ἀνίστη, ἀναψύχειν ἀνθρώπους.

Thee to the Elysian plain, earth's furthest end,
 Where Rhadamanthus dwells, the gods shall send;
 Where mortals easiest pass the careless hour;
 No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower;
 But ocean ever, to refresh mankind,
 Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind.

ABRAHAM MOORE.

Compare Pindar, *Ol.* II. 61, and the beautiful fragments of his *Threni* or funeral songs; Virg. *Æn.* VI. 608, 717, &c. Virgil represents some as undergoing eternal punishment (*sedet eternumque sedebit Infelix Theseus*), and others as destined to return to life (*animæ quibus altera fato Corpora debentur*); in both these respects following Plato. Polybius says, "It was no ill-considered device in the ancients, to make the common people believe in the gods, and in the punishments of the nether world;" for, he says, "it was owing to their greater superstition in these matters, that the Romans were a more honest people than the Greeks." (VI. p. 497, Casaubon).

II. On the Etruscan urns and sarcophagi, death is generally represented as the departure on a journey; in the lower world frightful demons receive and torment the soul; but it does not appear that any monuments have yet been found descriptive of a future state of happiness. See Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, Vol. I. p. LVI. 348; II. 192.

III. For drawings of Egyptian pictures representing the future judgment of Osiris (alluded to at p. 33), see Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, Second Series, Vol. III. plate 87, and Prichard on *Egyptian Mythology*.

Herodotus says (II. 123), "The Egyptians were the first to entertain the following doctrine: that the human soul is immortal, and on the dissolution of the body

passes into another animal which happens to be coming into existence, and so from time to time (ἐς ἄλλο ζῶον αἰεὶ γινόμενον ἐσδύεται); and when it has gone through the cycle of all the animals in earth, sea, and air, which it does in 3000 years, it enters again some human body which is coming into existence. Two schools of the Greeks, one first and another subsequently, made use of this doctrine as if it had been their own; I could mention their names, but forbear," τῶν ἐγὼ εἰδὼς τὰ ὀνόματα, οὐ γράφω (i. e. Pythagoras, and probably Plato).

This passage, when correctly understood, excludes the opinion entertained by St Augustine, and advocated by Sir G. Wilkinson, (*Ancient Egyptians*, Second Series, Vol. II. pp. 444, 462), that the Egyptians believed the soul would hereafter reanimate its former body, and that with this expectation they took such great pains to preserve the body. Herodotus says distinctly εἰς ἀνθρώπου σῶμα γινόμενον ἐσδύνειν, "a human body which is being formed or born"—not the old body which was already in existence.

The trial of the dead, alluded to at p. 33, is described by Diodorus Siculus, I. 93. It took place just before the funeral procession commenced, in the presence of forty-two judges, who were placed in a semicircle. See Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, Second Series, II. 426.

IV. The Persian religion (said to have been founded by Zoroaster about 600 B.C.) asserted that the soul after remaining in happiness or misery for a certain time, will be united to a pure and perfect body. Plutarch, *de Is. et Osir.* c. 46.

V. Concerning the religion of the Hindoos, our best authority appears to be the book called *The Ordinances of Menu*, the date of which is placed by Sir

W. Jones so far back as 880 B.C. Chapter XII. of that book treats of transmigration and final beatitude. "By the vital souls of those men, who have committed sins in the body reduced to ashes, another body composed of nerves with five sensations, in order to be susceptible of torment, shall certainly be assumed after death.

"If the vital spirit had practised virtue for the most part, and vice in a small degree, it enjoys delight in celestial abodes, clothed with a body formed of pure elementary particles;

"But if it had been generally addicted to vice, and seldom attended to virtue, then shall it be deserted by those pure elements; and having a coarser body of sensible nerves, it feels the pains to which Yama shall doom it.

"Having endured those torments according to the sentence of Yama, and its taint being almost removed, it again reaches those five pure elements in the order of their natural distribution."

The following is from Chap. VI. on Devotion.

"Let him (the devotee) slide backwards and forwards on the ground; or let him stand a whole day on tip-toe; or let him continue in motion rising and sitting alternately; but at sun-rise, at noon, and at sunset, let him go to the waters and bathe.

"In the hot season let him sit exposed to five fires, blazing around him, with the sun above; in the rains let him stand uncovered, without a mantle, where the clouds pour the heaviest showers. In the cold season let him wear humid vesture; and let him increase by degrees the austerity of his devotion, &c. &c.

"These and other rules must a Brahmin who retires to the woods diligently practise; and for the purpose of

uniting his soul with the Divine Spirit, let him study the various upanishads of scripture, or chapters on the essence and attributes of God.

“A Brahmin having shuffled off his body by any of those modes, which great sages practised, and becoming void of sorrow and fear, rises to exaltation in the divine essence.”—(Sir W. Jones, *Works*, Vol. III.)

VI. The Burmas do not believe in a Supreme Being, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, yet are much under the influence of religious feelings, and believe in a future state in which the rewards and punishments are proportioned to the virtues and vices of this present life. (Buchanan, “On the Religion, &c., of the Burmas,” *Asiatic Researches*, VI. 255.)

VII. The people of Ceylon are Buddhists, and believe that the souls of the good after death go to a state of happiness, those of the wicked transmigrate through different stages of existence, as a punishment. (Joinville, “On the Religion and Manners of the People of Ceylon,” *Asiatic Researches*, VII. 418, 437.)

VIII. The Chinese believe in the transmigration of souls, regarding it as a sort of purgatory. They hold annually a feast in honour of the dead, at which are represented the various gradations of happiness and misery in the life to come. It was the doctrine of Buddha, that the highest perfection in this life, and the greatest happiness in the next, were to be attained through contemplation and exemption from worldly cares. Many, therefore, of his disciples, passed their life in indolence, and practised begging as the most proper mode of supporting themselves. Davis’ *China*, I. 312; II. 90.

IX. The Druids of Gaul and Britain taught the transmigration of souls; Cæsar, *Bell. Gall.* VI. 14: “In

primis hoc volunt persuadere, non interire animas, sed ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios, atque hoc maxime ad virtutem excitari putant, metu mortis neglecto." See also Lucan, *Phars.* I. 450 ; Tac. *Ann.* XIV. 30. It is possible that they derived this doctrine from their intercourse, through Marseilles, with Greece, (so says Origen. *Philos.* c. ii. p. 46).

X. The Scandinavian tribes had their Walhalla, a place of carousal for departed warriors. Nastrond was the name of the cold and gloomy place reserved for the punishment of perjurers and secret murderers. The rest of mankind were to pass a joyless existence in hela (hell). See Turner's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, I. 232, 246. Kemble's *Saxons in England*, I. 393.

XI. Mr Catlin says of the North American Indians (Vol. I. p. 156), "The Mandans (on the Missouri) believe in a future state of existence, and a future administration of rewards and punishments, and so do all tribes that I have visited. They believe these punishments are not eternal, but commensurate with their sins. These people living in a climate where they suffer from cold in the severity of their winters, have very naturally reversed our ideas of heaven and hell. The latter they describe to be a country very far to the north, of barren and hideous aspect, and covered with eternal snows and ice. The torments of this freezing place they describe as most excruciating; whilst heaven they suppose to be in a warmer and delightful latitude, where nothing is felt but the keenest enjoyment, and where the country abounds in buffaloes and other luxuries of life."

XII. The Aztecs or ancient Mexicans supposed that the wicked, comprehending the greater part of mankind, were to expiate their sins in a place of everlasting

darkness. Another class, who had died of certain specified diseases, were to enjoy an indolent contentment. The highest place, as in most warlike nations, was reserved for heroes who fell in battle or sacrifice. They passed at once into the presence of the Sun, whom they accompanied with songs and choral dances, in his bright progress through the heavens; and after some years their spirits went to animate the clouds and singing birds of beautiful plumage, and to revel amidst the rich blossoms and odours of the garden of Paradise. Prescott's *History of Mexico*, I. 56.

XIII. Garcilasso was a native of Peru, brought over to Spain, about the year 1560, and there civilised and converted to Christianity. His testimony concerning the belief of his countrymen is very curious (*Hist. des Incas*. French translation by Baudoin, Vol. I. p. 140). “Les Incas croyaient qu’après cette vie il y en avoit une autre, qui étoit meilleure pour les bons, et pire pour les méchans, à cause de la récompense des uns, et du supplice des autres. Ils croyaient que l’autre monde étoit corporel à peu près comme ceci que nous passons ici bas, et ils faisoient consister le repos du haut monde à mener une vie paisible, et libre des inquiétudes de celle-ci. Au contraire ils assuroient que la vie du monde inférieur, que nous appelons Enfer, étoit pleine de toutes les maladies et de tous les maux que nous souffrons ici bas, sans qu’il y en eût aucune sorte de repos, ni de contentement.

“Ils croyaient encore la Résurrection universelle, sans pourtant que leur esprit s’élevât plus haut que cette vie animale.” He mentions certain practices connected with this belief in the Resurrection of the body, quotes some Spanish authors who confirm his testimony on this point, and adds, “Ces autorités que j’ai trouvées, après avoir

écrit ce que j'en avois ouï dire à mes parens, m'ont fort satisfait, parce que la créance de la Résurrection est très éloignée de celle des Païens, et que je craignois qu'on ne me reprochât d'avoir inventé ce que j'en ai dit, s'il ne se fut trouvé quelque Espagnol qui en eût fait mention dans l'histoire." See also Prescott, *Conquest of Peru*, I. 83.

XIV. The islanders of the Pacific imagine that some souls after death go to an aromatic elysium, while others are tormented and eaten (an idea worthy of cannibals). Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, I. 517. Cook's *Third Voyage*, p. 164.

XV. Bruce's *Travels*, III. 242: "The Galla, an Abyssinian tribe, believe that after death they are to live again; that they are to rise again with their body, as they are on earth, to enter into another life, they know not where, but they are to be in a state of body infinitely more perfect than the present; and are to die no more, nor suffer grief, sickness, or trouble of any kind. They have very obscure, or no ideas at all, of future *punishment*: but their reward is to be a moderate state of enjoyment, with the same family and persons with whom they lived on earth. And this is very nearly the same belief with the other Pagan nations in Africa, with which I have conversed intimately."

XVI. The Greenlanders differ in their opinions. Some say that the Northern lights are the dances of sportive souls; others consider that the happiness of the future life will consist in hunting, and in feeding on seal's heads, and that the wicked are infested with ravens. Crantz, *Hist. of Greenland*, Eng. Transl. I. 203.

XVII. The people of Kamskatka believe that in

the next life they shall have all things in abundance, that they shall suffer no more from the Russians, that the rich shall be poor, and *vice versâ*: that the wicked shall be punished. Meiner's *Algem. Gesch. der Relig.* chap. xiv.

LECTURE III.

THE OPINIONS OF HEATHEN PHILOSOPHERS.

I. COR. III. 19.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

I CONSIDERED in my last Lecture the popular notions of the heathen world with respect to a future life. I endeavoured to shew that an expectation of the judgment to come, a certain looking for of retribution, has existed, under various forms, and with more or less distinctness, in almost every corner of the earth; not only in the ancient seats of civilization, in Greece and Italy and Egypt and India, but among the uncultivated tribes of Northern Europe, and in the furthest East, and throughout the vast regions of the Western Hemisphere. This belief was found to be independent of the policy of statesmen; no invention of poets, not the discovery of philosophers; a principle too active and clearly marked to be mistaken for a mere day-dream, a yearning of our fallen nature after the happiness it has lost. The all but uni-

versal prevalence of such a principle can only be accounted for by supposing it to have formed a part of that Natural Revelation which God made of himself in the beginning. And, indeed, we can hardly conceive any Natural Religion to have existed at all, unless this formed one of its essential articles. But divine and pure as the doctrine was in itself, it shared the fate of all that was divine and pure in human nature. It was corrupted, and associated with many abominations. And as for its practical effects, in one part of the world it brought forth the evil fruits of fanaticism, while in another it remained barren and lifeless, being choked by the cares and temptations of this present world. The affections and passions of men became fixed upon temporal objects. If they were not satisfied with such objects, at least they were engrossed by them. We have yet to see what part was taken by the reason, that power which claims to sit supreme over all the other principles of our nature, directing their blind impulses, and restraining their headlong impetuosity. Did the reason render good service to the faith of men, or did it conspire with other enemies to overthrow it? This question is the subject of our enquiry to-day. The answer has already been suggested to you by

the words which I have taken as my text: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." These are indeed heavy words—humiliating to the pride of human reason: but they are the words of Scripture, and they have been applied to our present subject by one of the ancient fathers of the Church. St. Augustine¹ used them to designate the speculations of philosophers with respect to a future life; and we shall be compelled to acknowledge that his application of them was not incorrect. The primitive faith had become disguised by superstitions, which imposed for a time upon the credulity of mankind. At length reason awoke, and discovered the imposture; and being incensed by it, as she well might be, rejected indiscriminately both the superstition and the faith. At first indeed she undertook to prove the same things which faith had taught; to demonstrate that much of what men ignorantly believed was absolutely true; that the soul was immortal, that a retribution was at hand. But the arguments which were used in this behalf failed of their purpose. Other arguments presented themselves on the opposite side. Reason was able to throw the subject into confusion and uncertainty, but was

¹ Serm. CXXXIX. Vol. x. p. 193. (Ed. Paris, 1571.)

incapable of bringing order out of the chaos which she had created. Faith indeed was subverted, but demonstration did not take its place. Superstition was exploded, but it was succeeded by scepticism.

Such will be the result of our enquiry. And when we have attained this result, shall we proceed to disparage and decry the human reason, on account of this its grievous failure? on the contrary, we shall say that it was overthrown, because it intruded upon a subject foreign to its province, and beyond its reach. But we shall still acknowledge it to be a divine and glorious faculty, so long as it does not overstep the boundaries which God has appointed to it. And if we find that it was misused and misled in former ages, let us not suppose that this is now a matter of no concern ; much less let us take occasion for boasting and self-complacency, on account of our own comparative freedom from error. An example will be exhibited, which is very applicable to ourselves ; a danger, from which our own times are by no means exempt.

In the observations which I am about to offer, I shall not attempt to examine in detail the speculations of the ancient philosophy. Such an investigation would be neither practicable nor desirable on such an occasion as

this¹. Sufficient however for our purpose will be a general survey of the subject. And in making this survey, our attention may safely be limited to the wisdom of Greece and Italy; for in these countries only did the human reason attain its full development, and leave imperishable monuments of its strength and of its weakness.

And here we may at once dismiss all those philosophers who preceded Socrates. Whether they were wise or foolish in their generation, we know very little of their doctrines, and that little only at second hand; they appear to have treated the future destiny of the soul merely as a physical question, and without any reference to its practical and moral bearings.

With regard to that philosopher who is said to have first given a practical turn to the speculations of human reason, the general consent of antiquity, and the testimony of his disciples forbid us to doubt that he looked forward to a future life, and held, at least on this subject, by the popular faith. If there ever was, in heathen times, a man who lived and died in that belief, it was Socrates. Whatever he may have done to establish it

¹ For a summary of the opinions of the ancient philosophers, see note at the end of this Lecture.

by argument, he appears certainly to have adorned it by that which was more effective, by the force of his own example. The reasonings which he is represented to have used may be more properly attributed to the disciple by whom they are recorded. But whether they are due to Socrates or Plato, they comprise nearly all that the unaided reason can allege, in behalf of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments. It is therefore important to consider their nature and their value.

1. Some of the arguments adduced by Plato in proof of a future life, were of a physical, or more properly speaking of a metaphysical character; founded on certain assumptions respecting the nature and essence of the soul. But these assumptions were in themselves so arbitrary and unwarrantable, that no solid system could possibly be built upon them, no conclusion could be established, strong enough to determine the doubts or influence the conduct of any human being. Theories were erected, beautiful and imposing in appearance; but their foundations as well as their superstructure were placed in the airy regions of the imagination. Thus it was asserted that the soul is capable of moving itself, and that every thing

capable of moving itself is immortal; and that therefore the soul is immortal. But how was it to be known that the soul moved of itself; or if it did, that it was on that account immortal? These propositions were not self-evident; they required proof, and they could not be proved. They were assumed to be true; but it might have been asserted, with at least as much probability, that the soul lives and moves and has its being at the will of some higher Power; and that at the pleasure of that Power, its life, its motion, its being, will terminate. To resort, therefore, to assumptions of this kind—to draw conclusions from them—to call this a process of reasoning, a demonstration of a future life, was no better than a mockery; it was truly to give men a stone, when they asked for the bread of life. Yet this is only one specimen of the arguments which were used by the wisest of mankind. The soul was assumed to have this or that property, and by virtue of such properties it was assumed to be immortal; whereas it could neither be shewn that the soul possessed these properties, nor that if it did, its immortality was a necessary consequence.

2. But apart from these airy speculations, another argument was deduced, with more

show of reason, from the apparent analogies of nature. It was observed that the soul often retains its energies, when the bodily powers are suspended by sleep or enervated by disease. There are cases, not few nor far to seek, where amidst bodily decay and ruin the spirit dwells unhurt, and shines brightly and steadily to the last. Hence a probability arises that it may exist and act independently of the body, and that it will even act with greater freedom when released from this prison-house of flesh and blood; that it will be better fitted for the contemplation of things divine and heavenly, when disengaged from its gross and sensual companion. These observations undoubtedly have some force; but they are open to the reply, that at least in some respects there appears to be a mutual dependence, and a sympathy, between soul and body; that in very many cases the faculties of the mind are impaired, disturbed, or suspended from their operations by the same causes which interfere with the bodily powers; thus they are frequently impaired by sickness, disturbed by pain, and altogether suspended by sleep. Moreover the energies of the mind and body seem generally to advance, arrive at maturity, and decay together, the bodily functions being, so far as

we can see, the first to commence their activity, and the latest to desist from it. It is some time before the infant manifests the first spark of intelligence, the first proof of consciousness ; and old age occasionally presents the sad spectacle of the bodily functions working still, when the mental faculties have ceased to act. From these considerations it would appear that the soul acts through the body, as by an instrument ; and if so, how can we tell, what proof have we looking merely to *the analogies of nature*, that when the instrument is dissolved, the silver cord loosed, and the golden bowl broken, the soul will be able any longer to exercise its functions, or to retain consciousness, or any distinct personal existence, or any existence whatever ? In the same manner any analogy in favour of a future life might be met by another, which made against it. And on the whole it is manifest, that the analogies of Nature, if taken by themselves, and compared together, would afford at the utmost only a faint probability in favour of the immortality of the soul. They were however greatly relied on, as a proof of that doctrine. And they passed as a proof, with those who were already persuaded upon other and surer grounds. He who listened to the voice within him, assuring

him he should never die, heard echoes of that voice returned to him on all sides from the Natural world ; and he readily accepted those echoes, as a voice external to himself, as an independent testimony. Whereas he who gave no heed to the voice in his own bosom, which said "Thou art immortal," would refuse to hear any responses which might be made to that voice, though they should resound from every part of the creation.

It is worthy of observation that the idea of a future life, suggested by these analogies, was at variance with the popular notion, and suitable to the more refined speculations of the philosophers. The popular belief, though it did not suppose that any part of the body would survive the stroke of death, yet contemplated the future world as a scene of corporeal tortures or enjoyments. But the analogies of nature, of which we have just been speaking, if they proved the future subsistence of the soul at all, proved it by shewing that the soul is independent of the body ; and thus led to the inference, that in a future stage of existence the soul would be free from all those affections which it now derives from its conjunction with the body.

3. The arguments which have hitherto been noticed do not touch the question of

a future retribution. They regard the soul merely as an immortal being, and neither decide nor suggest anything as to its happiness or misery. But there was another class of arguments, more forcible than either of the former two, which bore directly on this point. When the heathen sage looked abroad in the world, and saw vice so often prosperous, virtue so often suffering and oppressed, the conviction forced itself upon his mind, that there must be yet another state of existence, in which these irregularities will be corrected; that God will not always be long-suffering to the wicked, nor hide his face for ever from them that seek him. And more than this; an approach was even made to the great Christian principle, that all things work together for good to them that love God; for it was broadly laid down by Plato¹, that “although the righteous man fall into poverty or disease, or any other of the so called calamities of life, even these things will conduce to his welfare, either in this world, or after his death.”

This argument, I say, founded on moral grounds, was a good and valid one; but then

¹ De Repub. Lib. x. p. 612. οὕτως ἄρα ὑποληπτέον περὶ τοῦ δικαίου ἀνδρός, ἐάν τ' ἐν πενίᾳ γίγνηται, ἐάν τε ἐν νόσοις ἢ τινι ἄλλῳ τῶν δοκούντων κακῶν, ὡς τούτῳ ταῦτα εἰς ἀγαθόν τι τελευτήσει ζῶντι ἢ ἀποθανόντι.

it was by no means the discovery of the unassisted reason; for here the reason was relying upon Natural Religion, and taking the popular belief of mankind as a first principle. It was only arguing from one truth of Natural Religion to another. It was taking for granted one half, and then saying that the other half was necessary, to complete the whole. It was taking for granted the divine holiness and justice and mercy, and then inferring that as these attributes are not fully vindicated here, they will be hereafter. Such an argument might satisfy those who so far admitted the truth of Natural Religion as to believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; but they would have no effect on the philosopher, who had cast off the faith as a popular delusion, and who sought to prove all things by the force of the unaided reason. And accordingly we find that this argument, proving as it does at once a future life and a future retribution, and being in reality a sound and valid one, was soon set aside by the wise men of this world. They were not content with the God, whom the light of Nature had made known to men. They imagined a God for themselves; and to that God they attributed such qualities as they chose to consider wor-

thy of him. Wrath and Vengeance, they imagined, were inconsistent with the majesty of the Godhead ; they presumed that his loving-kindness would restrain him from inflicting punishment even upon the most rebellious of his creatures. Hence they denied that he exercised any moral government over men ; or that he had any good or evil things in store, either in this life or in another, for those who served or for those who disobeyed him. Such were the aberrations of human reason when it essayed to walk by its own light, and disdained that Natural Revelation, which was intended to be its guide, “as a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawned.”

We have now seen the general character of Plato's reasonings in favour of a future life. They were founded partly on some visionary speculations respecting the nature of the soul ; and in part on certain analogies of nature, which could only have weight if certain other analogies, of an opposite tendency, were kept out of sight. There was, besides, the argument in favour of a future retribution, founded on the knowledge of God's moral attributes, and on the observed irregularity of his moral government in this present world. And we have seen how ineffectual all these arguments were to satisfy the human

reason. But it is instructive to observe the value which was put upon them by their author. He says¹ in one place that even the best reasoning on this subject is but a crazy raft, scarce likely to survive the storms to which it will be exposed in life's troublous voyage. He knew not of that haven of certainty into which we have been brought, nor of the hope which we have as an anchor of the soul. Again, after contending for some time, in favour of a future life, and fighting as one that beats the air, he concludes that only God² knows whether it be better to live or to die; no mortal can tell. But now who knows not? who is ignorant that it is better to depart hence and be with Christ; that though even to live is Christ, yet to die is gain? He said, and said most truly, that nothing³ short of a divine Revelation could certify us of the future condition of the soul. How far was he from imagining that such a

¹ Plat. *Phæd.* p. 3. δεῖ τὸν βέλτιστον τῶν ἀνθρώπων λόγων λαβόντα καὶ δυσελεγκτότατον, ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὀχοῦμενον, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ σχεδίας κινδυνεύοντα, διαπλεῦσαι τὸν βίον.

² Plat. *Apol.* ad fin. ὦρα ἀπιέναι, ἐμοὶ μὲν θανουμένῳ ὑμῖν δὲ βιωσομένοις, ὁπότεροι δὲ ἡμῶν ἔρχονται ἐπὶ ἄμεινον πρᾶγμα, ἀδηλον πάντι πλὴν ἢ τῷ θεῷ.

³ Plat. *Timæ.* p. 72. τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ ψυχῆς, ὅσον θνητὸν ἔχει καὶ ὅσον θεῖον . . . τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς, θεοῦ ξυμφήσαντος τότε ἂν οὕτω μόνως δι᾽ ἰσχυρίζοιμεθα.

Revelation would ever be made, and that he who gave it would seal it by his own example! But while Plato exercised his reason on this high subject in a manner so little satisfactory even to himself, we may venture to think that he did not altogether become estranged from that popular belief which came not by reasoning, and which corrupt as it was, nevertheless was a better thing to hold by than the reasonings of philosophy. Though he “hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns which could hold no water,” he did not entirely forsake the fountains of living water. He sometimes bursts forth into anticipations and descriptions of a future state, in which we would fain recognise the fervour of real belief uniting with the glow of a poetic fancy.

We cannot say so much of his successors. He had set them the example of reasoning on the subject; they followed that example, and, committing themselves wholly to reason, that “crazy raft,” relinquished the faith to which he had clung. It is however remarkable that his great and immediate successor, Aristotle, appears to have abstained from reasoning on the future state. It may be that as a man he believed, but found that as a philosopher he could not give a reason for his faith—could not reconcile it with his system—

could not establish it by argument. However that may be, he has observed a strict silence where we should most expect him to have spoken out, and the expressions scattered up and down in his works are so ambiguous, that his real opinion remained a fruitful subject of controversy to after ages. But his reserve was not imitated by those who came after him. At first with some timidity, but soon with boldness and decision, they cast off the popular superstition and the popular faith. The doctrine of a future retribution was ridiculed alike by the philosophic votaries of pleasure, and by those who maintained the supremacy of virtue; and it found no favour with any intermediate school. It had been brought into irretrievable discredit by the vulgar superstitions and by the fictions of the poets. The doctrine of the soul's immortality scarcely met with a better fate. The arguments of Plato were far from establishing it; they only shewed that if it were to stand on any other ground than that of religious faith, if it were to be placed at the mercy of human reason, human reason could not, and would not support it. By one party therefore it was absolutely denied, by another it was admitted as a probability; for some homage was paid to the deep and irrepres-

sible instinct of our nature. But, even by these, the doctrine was treated merely as a speculation. It had no practical effect, and could have none, unconnected as it was with religion, and mutilated of its most essential part, the belief in a future retribution.

Such was the state of opinion in the ancient schools of philosophy. And to those seats of pretended wisdom, of "science falsely so called," the noblest youths of Italy repaired for instruction, during the most flourishing period of the Roman Commonwealth. To have overthrown the popular faith was a result flattering to the pride of human reason, and gratifying to all the vices of our nature. It is not surprising therefore that such doctrines as I have mentioned met with willing listeners, and that infidelity went forth from the seclusion of the Porch, the Academy, and the Garden, and spread widely among the higher classes of society. The sanctions of a future life being set aside, the divine law was disregarded, a general laxity of manners prevailed, public and private virtue was discredited and disappeared, earnestness of purpose and strong convictions were looked upon as the signs of a narrow and illiberal spirit. No wonder therefore that when a prisoner bound in chains began pleading not for himself, but

for the Resurrection of the dead, the judge did not understand such earnestness on such a subject, and “exclaimed with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning hath made thee mad.” No wonder that “Gallio cared for none of these things.” No wonder that another Governor in another judgment-hall enquired, in solemn mockery, “What is truth?” All doctrines, that is to say, were equally true, and none were worth a moment’s concern, and it was madness for a man to hazard his life in defence of any!

But it may be said that a future life was advocated by Cicero, the only philosopher, worthy of the name, whom Rome produced before the Christian era. It is true he collected and adorned, with his accustomed eloquence, the arguments in favour of the immortality of the soul. But he took the lowest possible ground; he gave up altogether the idea of a future retribution, and he was satisfied with entrenching himself in this pitiful dilemma, that death is either a total annihilation, or the entrance to a better state of existence; and, therefore, in neither case a proper object of dread. And though he contended for the latter and more hopeful alternative, he yet admitted the possibility of the former. But, however he might affect the style and

the sentiments of Plato in his formal treatises, the language which he used on public occasions, and in his private intercourse with friends, does not allow us to suppose that he had any cordial belief, or that there was any soul in his philosophy. And when the hour of trial arrived, and the blow of domestic affliction fell upon him, we find him mourning as one that had no hope.

That I have not overstated the infidelity of the upper classes will be evident, if we contemplate for a moment the scene which took place on a great occasion in the Roman senate; an assembly, as we may well presume, not surpassed in gravity or intelligence by any at that time existing in the world. The question was a momentous one, touching the life and death of certain citizens who had conspired against their country. Two speakers addressed the assembly; men differing not more in their public views than in their private characters, and in the complexion of their minds. Unlike in all other respects, and maintaining opposite opinions on the subject of debate, they had this one thing in common, that they both professed their disbelief in a future life. The one in set terms declared that there was no room for either joy or sorrow after death. The other

is represented to have praised this sentiment and to have enlarged upon it, as if it were a common-place, likely to be well received by his audience. And how was it received? Was it censured by no one—not even by the presiding magistrate, charged as he especially was to see “that the state should receive no detriment?” Did he not consider that he should be himself inflicting an injury on his country, if he permitted such language to be twice used without reproof? He noticed it indeed, but not to reprove it. He repeated it, and concurred in it. He treated the doctrine of a future retribution as an old and threadbare tale, invented by the magistrates of some simpler age, for the restraint and terror of evil-doers. And he who thus spoke was master of all the reasonings of philosophy: this was he whom we have seen the lukewarm advocate of the immortality of the soul: this was no other than Cicero himself¹.

My brethren, if it is impossible in our favoured age and nation, that an assembly of cultivated men should allow such sentiments to pass without rebuke, let us not suppose that our happier condition is due to the discoveries of reason—to the march of human wisdom and sagacity. Rather, we shall attri-

¹ See note at the end of this Lecture, pp. 97, 98.

bute the change to that divine Revelation, by which Faith has been re-established and restored to her supremacy, and Reason has been confined to her proper sphere, and taught to be subordinate to Faith.

Such then was the infidelity of those times ; engendered by false philosophy, it was fostered by the corruptions incidental to civilisation. The reason of man was in alliance with his passions, with his vices, with his short-sighted love of the things of this world. In the midst however of all this professed and actual scepticism, there is one circumstance which must not be overlooked, for it stands out in striking and bold relief. The deep instinct of our nature, which revolts at the idea of annihilation, and which is ever whispering to each of us, that we shall live for ever, was not to be entirely stifled. Though suppressed in one shape, it reappeared in another. The very men who scouted the popular notions of a future state, yet imagined an immortality for themselves. Not indeed that they set their affections on things above, or laid up their treasure in heaven. Their dreary unbelief shut out heaven from their eyes, and limited their view to this work-day world—this scene of suffering and frail mortality. Here they sought to create for themselves an

immortality. They doted on posthumous renown. It was their ambition to live for ever, in the memory and on the lips of posterity. They looked forward to a future judgment—not however a divine, but a human one; to a tribunal before which they would never be arraigned; to a sentence by which they could not be affected. For the sake of this they persuaded themselves that their hearts beat high with noble aspirations; for the sake of this the pleasures of life were to be foregone, and death itself to be despised. The observation is perhaps a true one, that “the desire of posthumous fame, and of the greatness and prosperity of one’s descendants, seems always to have been even the stronger in those who have believed least, or thought least, of a future life¹.” Thus the pretended sceptic, while he denied the substance, was worshipping the shadow; and thus the deep instinct of his nature avenged itself for the outrage which he had committed against it.

We have now seen how the human reason, under the conduct of Plato, commenced its enquiries, in subordination to the popular faith, or at least in alliance with it: how it

¹ Archbishop Whateley *On the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*, p. 125, (5th edition.)

afterwards stood aloof from the faith, and proceeded independently, on a system of its own; and how it ended with becoming hostile to the faith, and, so far as its influence extended, destructive of it. From all this we learn a lesson, which is enforced by the testimony of later ages. We learn not indeed that Reason should be altogether excluded from the province of Religion; we are not forbidden to approach God with one of the best members that we have. We are to seek him not with the heart alone, but with the understanding also. Let *all* that is within us praise his holy name. But we are taught that the use of reason on religious subjects is not free from danger, and is not to be indulged indiscriminately. We trust that the many experiments and failures of former ages have at length taught us the true province and legitimate functions of the human reason. In the first place, it is concerned to collect and weigh the evidence upon which the fact of a divine Revelation rests. But supposing the fact to be established, that a divine Revelation has been made, Reason has no power to prove, by any independent process of her own, the truth, or excellence, or necessity of the things revealed. Any attempt to do this, however

well-intentioned, will only lead us into confusion and darkness, and, like the reasonings of Plato, will have the effect of giving an advantage to the sceptic and the infidel.

Neither is Reason empowered to enlarge the domain of revealed truth, to fill up the void places with her own inferences and conclusions, and to bind those¹ conclusions on the consciences of men, as of equal and co-ordinate authority with Revelation itself: for the Revelation is indisputable, but the conclusions of the most enlightened human reason are liable to error.

But if Reason may not add to Revelation, neither may she detract from it, nor question its wisdom, nor derogate from its authority, nor maintain that one part is less binding than another, nor erect any standard of her own, by which the eternal counsels may be essayed. The fact of a Revelation being once established, Faith is the principle of our nature which is chiefly concerned about it, and Reason can only act as the handmaid of Faith. In this capacity however she may still do good service, by searching the Scriptures, by labouring with all humility and reverence to

¹ An instance of this may be found in the doctrine of Purgatory; see Lecture VIII.

ascertain their meaning, and to remove their obscurities, by comparing the written with the unwritten Revelation, and shewing that the two are not discordant, but reconcileable with each other. Thus with regard to a future life, though the natural world yields no analogies sufficient in themselves to prove the doctrines of the Gospel, and though at first sight it seems to present some analogies against that doctrine, yet on the whole, when closely questioned and examined by human reason, it affords no presumption against the truth of Revelation. It might be probable, if we considered only one side of the phenomena of Nature, that the shock of death which dissolves the body, would destroy the spirit also. This is an analogy against a future life. But when we observe how the soul sometimes retains its energies, through pain and sickness, up to the moment of dissolution, we can scarcely resist the presumption, that it will pass through that awful crisis without harm. Here then is a second analogy, which as many would say, preponderates over the first; but at any rate it balances it, and justifies us in asserting that the analogies of Nature are, on the whole, not opposed to the doctrine of the Gospel. Again, with regard to God's moral

government of the world, we are surrounded with mysteries, whether we look forward to the future, or contemplate the present. But the difficulties of Revelation and the difficulties of the Natural World seem in some degree to explain each other, when they are compared together. The present unequal distribution of happiness and misery is a mystery. The future judgment is a mystery also. But if men here had their exact deserts, a future retribution would be still more mysterious than it is ; and if there were no future retribution, the present irregularities in the moral government of the world would be still more unaccountable.

If our reason be exercised in this manner, it will have a salutary influence, tending to the establishment of our faith. Otherwise it will only lead to the knowledge which puffeth up, to the oppositions of science falsely so called, to the wisdom which is “ foolishness with God.”

And we, my Brethren, who dwell in this seat of learning, in this school of Reason, we have especial need to be reminded, that we abuse not the privileges which we here enjoy. It is our privilege, and it is our duty, to exercise the best powers of the understanding

upon our holy Religion. In order that we may give a reason for our faith, we must tell her towers and mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces ; we must study her defences, and contemplate her fair proportions. But while we are thus engaged, let us take care that we do not fall into a cold speculative habit of viewing religious subjects ; that while we fix the doctrines of Revelation in our understanding, we do not erase them from the tablets of our heart. If such were to be the end of our studies, we had better not have begun them.—For faith without knowledge is better than knowledge without faith.—The heartless convictions of the reason will not carry us so far as the unreasoning impulses of the heart. They will stand us in no stead when temptation and affliction come upon us. When the sun is up they will be scorched, and because they have no root in the heart they will wither away. It will be well if they do not give place to the noxious weeds of doubt and infidelity.

Whatever therefore may be our advance in Christian learning, it must still be the first necessity, the only safeguard of our lives, *to have faith in Christ* ; to rest upon him with all our soul—to love him as our Saviour, to

fear him as our Judge. Towards him the wisest of mankind must still look up with childlike feelings of reverence and reliance. And unless in this respect we are as the little children, we shall not enter into the kingdom of God.

NOTE ON LECTURE III.

IN illustration of the preceding Lecture, I have here brought together the opinions of the leading philosophers of antiquity upon the condition of the soul after death.

Some speculations concerning the immortality of the soul have been attributed by ancient writers to Thales of Miletus, the founder of the Ionic philosophy, who flourished B.C. 560. He was reputed by some to have been the first who affirmed the doctrine, resting it on physical grounds, and saying that the soul must be an eternal principle, because it produces motion. (Diog. Laert. i. 24. Theodoret. Serm. v. p. 83). This statement, though not improbable, is not to be received as certain; for no writings of Thales are extant, and his opinion as to the nature of the soul was a matter of doubt, even in the time of Aristotle; as appears from the following passage (Aristot. *de Animā*, i. 2, 22): "From what is related of Thales it seems that he supposed the soul to be something capable of exciting motion; if at least it be true that he said the loadstone has a soul, because it excites motion in iron."

Pherecydes of Syros, the master of Pythagoras, (B.C. 544) was the earliest philosopher whose written opinion on the immortality of the soul was extant in the time of Cicero: "Primum dixit, quod quidem literis exstet, animas hominum esse sempiternas." (*Tusc.* i. 16.)

Pythagoras (B.C. 510) derived his philosophy partly from the Ionic school, and partly from Egypt. Accord-

ing to him, the soul consists of two parts, the one divine, rational, immortal ; the other earthly, sensual, and mortal. The pure and virtuous soul is by death entirely released from its grosser parts, and so enabled to return at once to God. The impure and wicked soul is sent back to life again and again, until it is at length purged of its earthly element. See Virg. *Æn.* vi. 745 ; Ov. *Met.* xv. 160 ; *Aureum carmen* ; Hor. *Od.* i. 28 ; Herod. ii. 123.

Anaxagoras, the master of Euripides, flourished B.C. 450. His opinion as to the *nature* of the soul appears not to have differed much from that of Thales. (Aristot. *de An.* i. 2. 9, 10, 32.) But we have no proof that he considered the soul *immortal*.

Democritus of Abdera in Thrace, born B.C. 460, died B.C. 351. He held the soul to be a fortuitous concourse of atoms, and therefore liable to dispersion and dissolution. Aristot. *de An.* i. 2. 4. *Scriptor anon. de placitis philosophorum*, iv. 7. Brucker, *Hist. Phil.* i. p. 1195.

The above sketch, short as it is, will be found to represent the opinions of the philosophers preceding Socrates, so far as those opinions can now be ascertained. The physical essence of the soul was the principal subject of speculation ; its future existence was only incidentally and slightly discussed, except by Pythagoras, who introduced from Egypt, and gave prominence to the doctrine of metempsychosis. But it may be doubted whether Pythagoras, or any other philosopher of this period, maintained the continuance of consciousness, the preservation of personal identity after death.

With regard to the opinions of Socrates on this subject, it must be admitted that we derive no certain information from Xenophon's Memoirs ; it is also true that we cannot exactly say to what extent Plato has put

his own sentiments and reasonings into the mouth of Socrates; still it is impossible to suppose that the disciple would represent his master maintaining both philosophically and practically the belief in a future state, if such a representation were totally inconsistent with the fact.

Assuming, however, that the arguments contained in the Dialogues of Plato are for the most part due to Plato, we may proceed to give a short summary of them.

I. *Phædrus*, p. 344. Whatever has motion intrinsically is without beginning; and that which is without beginning, is without end. The body has not this intrinsic principle of motion; but the soul has. Therefore the soul is without beginning and without end, eternal. This doctrine, as we have seen, was perhaps suggested, though not clearly developed, by Thales. It was much relied on by Cicero. (*Tusc. Quæst.* i. 23). In a later dialogue, the *Phædo*, Plato has not employed it; possibly (as Wytttenbach remarks¹) because he had become sensible of its fallacy.

II. *De Repub.* x. p. 516. Things which are bad for the body, destroy it, as diseases and wounds—things which are bad for the soul do not seem to destroy it, as injustice, intemperance. Again, an evil happening to the body, as a disease or a wound, does not harm the soul, and much less kill it. We know of no evil therefore, either internal or external, either mental or bodily, which can destroy the soul.

III. *De Repub.* x. p. 612. The gods love righteousness and hate iniquity. Although, therefore, the righteous man may be afflicted with poverty, disease, &c., these things will certainly issue in his good, either here or hereafter.

¹ *Disputatio de Immortalitate Animæ*, Opusc. ii. 495.

IV. This and the following arguments are from the *Phædo*, the most important philosophical treatise, whether of ancient or modern times, on the future condition of the soul. The soul is best able to exercise its powers, when it has most completely abstracted itself from the body; thus shewing its independence of the body, by which it is now only encumbered, not assisted. For the body is the source of all vice and error. It is therefore possible, that when set free from the body, the soul will be better able to contemplate truth, better fitted to dwell with God.

V. Every thing which exists proceeds from its contrary; the strong becomes so from having been weak. That which becomes swift was previously slow. Thus from life proceeds death, and *vice versâ*; the dead proceed from the living, the living from the dead. To die is but to pass into the state which is contrary to life. Death is not annihilation, but the transition into another state. This argument has been illustrated by the German philosopher Mendelsohn, in his treatise entitled *Phædo*.

VI. If all the living were to die, without any of the dead returning to life, the circle of nature would be broken, the world could not be replenished. This argument goes on the supposition thrown out in the *Phædrus*, that the number of living beings is fixed and invariable, so that as some go out of the world others must *return* to it, in order to keep up the succession (like fantoccini figures, going out at one door and returning at the other).

VII. Knowledge is only the remembrance of things learnt in a former life. When we say a thing is beautiful, we refer it to a standard of beauty (*idea*) which we must have had previously; and we could not have acquired

that standard or idea by means of the bodily senses, for they only present to us individuals, not general ideas. We must therefore have acquired it before we were in the body. We have existed therefore before we came into this life; and, by V. and VI., the alternation will continue hereafter, *i. e.* we shall die and live again.

Some modern philosophers (Leibnitz, &c.) admit the existence in the soul of ideas which are not derived through the bodily senses. They do not however go along with Plato in supposing those ideas to have been acquired in a former life, but consider them to be innate, impressed on the soul at the commencement of its being.

VIII. Some have supposed that at death the soul is dissolved and dispersed, and that consequently its existence is terminated. But those things only can be dissolved which are composed of several parts; whereas the soul is a simple, as appears from its being impalpable to the senses, unchangeable, not liable to mutilation. Being therefore indissoluble, it will continue to exist after death.

This argument has been used by Bishop Butler, *Anal.* Chap. 1.

IX. Others assert that the soul is a harmony, consisting in the nice adjustment of the external elements, and that it will cease when they are deranged. But the soul cannot be defined to be a harmony, for it is often in a state of discord, from the influence of the appetites and passions.

X. The nature of the soul is analogous to that of ideas. The presence of the idea of beauty (τὸ καλόν) makes a thing to be beautiful. The presence of the soul makes the body to be alive. When a thing becomes ugly, the idea of beauty does not perish, nor undergo any

change, but retires, giving place to the idea of ugliness. So when the body dies, the soul does not perish, but departs.

Such are the arguments of Plato. He has also given several descriptions of the future state, which are highly ingenious and elegant, but altogether the creations of his imagination. He depicts the happiness of the good, and the torments (in some cases eternal) of the wicked. See the *Phædrus*, the *Phædo*, the *Gorgias*, and above all the *Republic*, Book x.

The opinion of Aristotle on the immortality of the soul has been for many ages a subject of controversy (see *infra*, Lecture VIII. and Brucker, *Hist. Phil.* i. 824.) He composed some popular works, now lost, in which he is said to have maintained the affirmative; but in his philosophical treatise *De Animâ*, where we might have expected to find his mature and deliberate opinion, he has not declared himself distinctly, either one way or the other. His book on Ethics (*ad Nicom.*) once or twice touches the subject incidentally; but the expressions which he there uses are too loose and contradictory to be regarded as philosophical dogmas. He adopts for the moment such popular notions as suit his purpose; but at the same time intimates that they are only popular notions.

(a) Thus in an enumeration of things which are objects of dread, he says (*Eth.* III. 6): "Above all, Death is an object of fear; for it is an end; and we suppose that nothing either good or evil can befall the dead." φοβερώτατον δ' ὁ θάνατος· πέρας γάρ· καὶ οὐδὲν ἔτι τῷ τεθνεῶτι δοκεῖ, οὔτε ἀγαθόν, οὔτε κακὸν εἶναι.

(b) Again, in the same treatise (*Eth.* I. 10), although he does not allow that the dead can be happy, εὐδαίμων, because according to his definition happiness implies ac-

tivity (εὐδαιμονία is ἐνέργειά τις); yet he adds, “we suppose that good and evil (*e.g.* honour and disgrace, the successes and misfortunes of children and descendants) may befall the dead, as well as the living who are without perception:” δοκεῖ γὰρ εἶναι τι τῷ τεθνεῶτι καὶ κακὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν, εἴπερ καὶ τῷ ζῶντι, μὴ αἰσθανομένῳ δὲ, οἷον τιμαὶ καὶ ἀτιμίαι, καὶ τέκνων καὶ ὅλως ἀπογόνων εὐπράξιαί τε καὶ δυστυχίαι. Here it is said that good and evil befall the dead, but it is implied that they are unconscious of it. But

(c) Shortly afterwards (*Eth.* i. 11) he entertains the notion, that the dead are conscious of what befalls their friends on earth; he says it would be a harsh thing and revolting to the common opinions of men to deny this: τὰς δὲ τῶν ἀπογόνων τύχας καὶ τῶν φίλων ἀπάντων τὸ μὲν μηδοτιοῦν συμβάλλεσθαι, λίαν ἄφιλον φαίνεται, καὶ ταῖς δόξαις ἐναντίον. But he says, it is probable (ῥοικε) that if the dead have such a sympathy for the living, it is of so slight a nature, as not materially to affect them: ῥοικε γὰρ ἐκ τούτων, εἰ καὶ διῴκνείται πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὁτιοῦν, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε τοῦναντίον, ἀφανρόν τι καὶ, μικρόν, ἢ ἀπλῶς, ἢ ἐκείνοις εἶναι· εἰ δὲ μὴ, τοσοῦτόν γε καὶ τοιοῦτον, ὥστε μὴ τοὺς εὐδαίμονας μὴ εὐδαίμονας ποιεῖν, μηδὲ τοὺς ὄντας ἀφαιρεῖσθαι τὸ μακάριον.

It is evident, that in each of these passages he is lending himself for the moment to a popular notion, without considering whether it is absolutely true, or consistent with other prevailing opinions about the dead. In (a) and (b) he says δοκεῖ, *we suppose, it appears*, in (c) he dismisses an opinion as being ταῖς δόξαις ἐναντίον. And his real sentiments cannot with certainty be inferred from any one of these passages.

Archbishop Whateley has an ingenious note on the opinion of Aristotle in his Essay, *On the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*, 5th edition, p. 120. He

points out the force of *δοκεῖ* in (*b*), and remarks on the oscitancy of former interpreters in not observing the true sense of that passage. But he has himself overlooked the same word *δοκεῖ* in the first passage (*a*), and thus has been led to make the hasty assumption that Aristotle in that passage stated his real opinion.

With regard to the third passage (*c*), Archbishop Whateley says, "Could he be so absurd as not only to pronounce positively that the dead *are* in a percipient state, and likewise that they are aware of what is passing among the survivors, but also that they are nevertheless affected only in a very *small* degree by the good or ill fortune of their friends? If they knew anything at all of it, how can he tell how much or how little they are affected?" This opinion is not however "pronounced positively" by Aristotle, but stated as a probable conjecture (*ἔοικε*); and with deference to the Archbishop, I do not see that it is *primâ facie* absurd; any more than it is absurd to say that our blessed Lord is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," *δυνάμενος συμπάθῃσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν* (Heb. iv. 15); such sympathy not detracting from the bliss of heaven. The notion here countenanced by Aristotle, that the dead are conscious of the condition of their friends, though not so as to be made happy or miserable thereby, may be true or not; Scripture, I think, is silent on the subject.—But, unless I am mistaken, the notion is entertained, very nearly as Aristotle states it, by many Christians at the present day.—St Augustine says, it is a difficult question "*utrum, vel quatenus, vel quomodo ea quæ circa nos aguntur, movent spiritus mortuorum.*" (ad Ps. cviii. 17.)

If any philosophical opinion on the subject may be gathered from Aristotle's treatise *De Animâ*, it would

seem to be this; that Reason, of which man is a partaker, exists eternally in God, but that the individual rational entities are not eternal; in other words, that personal identity does not subsist after death;—*i. e.* man is not an immortal being. (See Ritter, *Hist. Phil.* III. 256. Wytttenbach, *Opusc.* II. 601.)

Among the immediate successors of Aristotle the doctrine of the immortality of the soul had no zealous advocates, and many opponents. It was rejected by the Epicureans, by the Cynics, and by the Stoics; these last however admitted that the soul would survive the body for a length of time, the punishment of the wicked being that they should perish sooner than the good. “The Stoics in their bounty grant us a long lease of life, as if we were crows; they say the soul will survive a good while, but not for ever.” *Stoici autem usuram nobis largiuntur tanquam cornicibus; diu mansuros aiunt animos; semper, negant.* (Cic. *Tusc.* I. 32.) There were however some different shades in their opinions; for which see Wytttenbach, *Opusc.* II. 622, &c.

The principal treatise of Cicero on the future state of the soul, is the first book of his *Tusculan Disputations*. The proposition which he there lays down is the dilemma which Plato attributes to Socrates, that death is either absolute annihilation, or the beginning of a new and happier state; and in either case not a thing to be feared. He inclines decidedly to the latter alternative, and adduces as arguments in support of it:—

(1) The general belief of mankind that the soul is immortal: “*Permanere animas arbitramur, consensu nationum omnium*” (§ 16.) So large a portion of the globe had never been known to any nation, as had been then recently laid open to the Romans by the conquests

of Cæsar, Crassus, Pompey, &c. If Cicero therefore was not the first to use this argument, he had much stronger grounds for employing it than any philosopher who preceded him. And, apart from Revelation, it appears to be the strongest, if not the only really valid argument which can be adduced.

(2) The *nature* of the soul, which is spiritual, or fiery, according to the Stoics, or a number, as Pythagoras asserts, or a fifth element, according to Aristotle. In any case, on leaving the body it is carried upwards into a rarer medium, and there enjoys the twofold happiness of resting from earthly excitements, and of feeding on the contemplation of heavenly things. § 17—20.

(3) The argument of Plato (in the *Phædrus*) that the soul moves by its intrinsic energy, and is therefore immortal. § 23.

(4) The peculiar faculties of the soul, memory, judgment, &c., which forbid us to think it corporeal. It is divine, and therefore eternal. § 24.

He does not follow Plato in supposing the future life to be a state of retribution. Nor could he do so consistently with the doctrine which he had adopted from the Stoics: “*nunquam nec irasci Deum, nec nocere.*” (*De Off.* III. 28.)

The probable immortality of the soul is maintained by Cicero, with more rhetoric and less argument, in the *De Senectute* and *Somnium Scipionis*. But in his Orations and Epistles he never speaks with confidence of a future life. He several times repeats the dilemma mentioned above, and generally treats the two alternatives as equally probable. (*Ep. ad Fam.* vi. 2. v. 16. *de Am.* chap. 4.) Once he speaks of death as a state devoid of consciousness, “*nullum sensum habitura*” (*Ep. ad Fam.* v. 21);

and no expressions of a contrary import can be quoted. On the death of his daughter Tullia his grief was immoderate, shewing that he had no deep practical conviction of a future life. See *ad Att.* XII. 15.

For the speeches of Julius Cæsar, Cato of Utica, and Cicero, referred to at pp. 78–80 of the Lecture, see Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* cap. L. LIV. Cic. *in Cat.* IV. 4. Cæsar says: “De pœna possumus equidem dicere id quod res habet, in luctu atque miseriis mortem ærumnarum requiem non cruciatum esse; eam cuncta mortalium mala dissolvere; ultra neque curæ neque gaudio locum esse.” Upon which Cato remarks: “Bene et composite (πεφροντισμένως) C. Cæsar paulo ante in hoc ordine de vitâ et morte disseruit, credo falsa existumans, ea, quæ de inferis memorantur, diverso itinere malos a bonis loca tetra inculta fœda atque formidolosa habere.” (This same Cato, after meditating the *Phædo* of Plato, slew himself at Utica.) Cicero remarks: “Vitam solam relinquit (Cæsar) nefariis hominibus; quam si eripuisset, multas uno dolore, animi atque corporis, atque omnes scelerum pœnas ademisset. Itaque, ut aliqua in vita formido improbis esset posita, apud inferos ejusmodi quædam illi antiqui supplicia impiis constituta esse voluerunt: quod videlicet intelligebant, his remotis, non esse mortem ipsam pertimescendam.”

LECTURE IV.

THE JEWS BEFORE AND AFTER THE CAPTIVITY.

JOHN V. 39.

Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me.

IT has been the object of my former Discourses to trace the belief in a future life, as it prevailed among the heathen before the coming of Christ. We have found that belief everywhere existing, and tenacious of existence, but nowhere pure, nowhere exerting its proper influence on the heart ; generally corrupted by superstitious fancies, and counteracted in its practical effects by the vicious propensities of our nature : while reason, the noblest faculty of man, began indeed by espousing its cause, and made some attempt to establish it, but soon turned against it, and laboured to complete its overthrow ; reason, in her highest and proudest estate, thus going hand-in-hand with the basest appetites and passions, and conspiring with them to banish, if it were possible, all notion of a future

judgment. With such a combination against it, we cannot suppose this belief would ever, if left to itself, have regained its influence, though as a deep instinct of our nature it might not have been entirely eradicated. But before we consider the means by which it was at length placed on its proper grounds, we must turn our attention to a people whom we have hitherto left out of the question, even to that chosen race which by the inscrutable counsels of God was set apart, not more for their own immediate benefit, than for the eventual edification of the Gentile world. We have to enquire whether the Jews were in possession of that saving knowledge respecting a future life, which might have been made available for the welfare both of themselves and of the rest of mankind? Was the true doctrine preserved among them in peculiar purity, or in peculiar force? Was it communicated to them by any special Revelation? Could they have gone forth, with the Old Testament Scriptures in their hands, and convinced the world of a judgment to come? Were the Pharisees in the time of our Lord justified in thinking that in those Scriptures they had eternal life? or were those Scriptures intended to do more than testify of Him who was to bring life and immortality

to light ? To these questions, which are not without their difficulty, and certainly not without their interest, I shall now endeavour to suggest an answer.

The answer, I need not say, is to be sought first of all in those ancient books which trace the history of the Jewish people from its earliest origin, and which set forth the institutions of that people, as they were written by the finger of God, or dictated by his Holy Spirit. I need not remind you that the Mosaic Law, though of divine authorship, was only a partial and temporary system ; partial, that is, as compared with the fuller declaration of God's will, which has been made known to us ; temporary, because intended only to last until that perfect scheme should be developed, to which it had a reference. When that which was perfect did come, then that which was in part was done away. We cannot doubt that it was effectual for its purpose, but its¹ imperfections we cannot overlook, for they are pointed out to us by the Apostles of the new and better Covenant. It drew about the people a miraculous wall of separation from the rest of the world. And the people it made holy, but it did not sanc-

¹ See Barrow's *Sermon On the Imperfections of the Jewish Religion*. Hawkins's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 81.

tify the individual. It ordained that¹ the priest should offer prayer on behalf of the congregation, but it did not enforce communion with God as a personal duty and a personal privilege. It enjoined external ceremonies of purification for the body; but it had no inward lustration for the heart. It appointed sacrifices; but they were no more than types of the great propitiation to be offered in the fulness of time. And, to come to our present object, it enforced both the ceremonial and moral law by no prospect of an eternal retribution, but only by the sanctions of temporal rewards and punishments. We might perhaps have expected that any divine Revelation would have had the promise of a future life inscribed upon its front in letters of light, so that he who ran might read. But this, as is well known, was not the case with the Mosaic Law. It is agreed alike by ancient and modern divines, that the Books of Moses contain no express declaration of a future state². None such is to be found in the historical portion of the Pentateuch, none such is written in the Law. In the Law, God is represented holding his people as it were in his own hand, and enforcing

¹ Numb. vi. end. Bull, *Harm. Ap.* Diss. Post. x. 5.

² See note at the end of this Lecture.

obedience to his will by a peculiar Providence. But the inducements to good and the dissuasives from evil are to be found in the promise of earthly blessings, and the threat of earthly calamities. As God was visibly present between the cherubim, so he made his presence to be felt in the daily events of life. The divine dispensations of temporal good and evil happen to us according to laws which we cannot investigate, and do not bear a close and uniform relation to our moral conduct; but to the Jews they came in a known and intelligible course of administration, as the appointed retributions of obedience and disobedience. Among the Jews, the general tenor of a man's conduct, if not each particular action, was followed by a recompence of temporal good or evil, in a connexion sufficiently plain and impressive to mark it as the judicial visitation of the Almighty. The passages are too numerous to be here even referred to, in which God declares that if his people would walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments, and do them, then he would give them rain in due season, and the land should yield her increase, and the trees of the field should yield their fruit; and he would give peace in the land, so that they should lie down, and none should

make them afraid; and he would rid evil beasts out of the land, neither should the sword go through their land: and he would have respect unto them, and make them fruitful and multiply them. But if they despised his statutes, and abhorred his judgments, and broke his covenant; then he would appoint over them terror, consumption, and the burning ague; and they should sow their seed in vain, for their enemies should eat it; and they should be slain before their enemies, and they that hated them should rule over them; and they should flee when none pursued them; and he would send wild beasts among them, which should rob them of their children, and destroy their cattle, and make them few in number; and their highways should be desolate; and their strength should be spent in vain; for their land should not yield her increase, neither the trees of the land their fruits¹. Such passages, I say, are of frequent occurrence; they are reiterated like the burden of some awful song. And, lest it should be said that these promises and threatenings were held out only to Israel as a nation, and intended to enforce the national observance of God's law, but not meant to

¹ Levit. xxvi. See also Exod. xv. 26. xx. 12. Numb. xiv. 20. xxxii. 10. Deut. i. 35. iv. 1. v. 29, &c.

apply to individuals; lest it should be said that national prosperity and calamity alone were contemplated in this and similar declarations, we have other passages in which the conduct of individuals is especially the object of God's discriminating justice; the temporal curses of the law are threatened upon any "man, or woman, or family, or tribe," whose heart should turn away from the Lord¹. That which is called "the first commandment with promise" holds out length of days as the reward to him who should observe the duty of filial obedience. And to take one or two particular cases, we know that Moses died on Mount Nebo, and Aaron on Mount Hor, and were not allowed to enter that good land which lay before them, because they had angered the Lord by their disobedience at the waters of strife²; but Caleb and Joshua were permitted to enter the land, because they, and they alone of all the generation which came up out of Egypt, had been fully obedient unto God. And that this system of temporal retribution was actually carried into effect in later times, we learn from many examples; from the judgments of God recorded in the cases of Ahab, and Jezebel, and David, and Solomon, and Jeroboam, and others; and

¹ Deut. xxix. 18.

² Numb. xx. 12.

from the declaration of the Psalmist, who asserts, that though he had been young, and now was old, yet saw he never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread¹. Thus the conduct of an individual was visited upon himself and his descendants. Thus the Almighty displayed himself openly as the moral Governor of his people; and when any vice or virtue became a widely-prevailing and national practice, the retribution was visited upon the whole community: men were compelled to say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous: doubtless, there is a God that judgeth the earth²."

Such a system may well indeed excite our wonder, not only on account of the displays of divine power by which it was supported, but on account of its marked and mysterious silence respecting a future life. It is strange, that the promise of the life which now is should be so emphatically repeated, and so miraculously fulfilled, while the promise of the life which is to come was kept out of sight. The supernatural light that was thrown upon the present, and the obscurity which concealed the future, are equally mysterious; the wonder is not greater in the one case than in the other; just as the pillar of fire by

¹ Ps. xxxvii. 25.

² Ps. lviii. 10.

night was not more miraculous than the pillar of smoke by day. We have no right to question the wisdom of the Mosaic dispensation; and to explain its phenomena is as impossible, as it is impious to cavil at them. Some indeed have attempted to say, that the Jewish people were not sufficiently civilised, or sufficiently spiritual, to benefit by the sanctions of a future state; that to their carnal minds a carnal motive was best adapted; that they would have been unable to rise to the contemplation of a heavenly and immortal destiny¹. Such indeed may have been the case; but it seems better not to accept such unauthorised explanations, which may very possibly err altogether from the truth. While the general plan of the divine providence remains hidden from our eyes, how is it likely that we can estimate duly the bearings and significance of any one of its details? We may however assert thus much, for of this we can judge by our own experience, that though the motive by which the Jews were invited to obedience, was not so elevating nor so purifying, as that which has been opened to us, it was nevertheless a very stringent and effectual motive of action.

¹ This is suggested by Barrow, Serm. xv. See also Graves *On the Pentateuch*, II. 163.

This, I say, we may conclude from our own experience. For even now, when the judgment to come has been most fully declared, there are many among us who confessedly have no lively apprehension of it; while there are very few who are not in some degree restrained, in the indulgence of their unlawful passions, by the fear of the temporal consequences, by the knowledge that in this life virtue generally has its reward, and vice its punishment; even though these temporal rewards and punishments are not so signal, and not so regular, as they were in the Jewish commonwealth.

The Mosaic law therefore, containing as it does the whole code of Jewish faith and practice, includes no express announcement of a future retribution; nor indeed has it any express announcement of a life beyond the grave. Some hints of such a life it may contain—intimations capable of suggesting it to a mind already directed to the object. One intimation of this kind was pointed out by our Lord himself, when he reasoned with the Sadducees: he declared¹ that the Resurrection was shewn by Moses at the bush, “when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God

¹ Luke xx. 37.

of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living ; for all live unto him." But neither this passage, nor any other in the Books of Moses, amounts to an express and positive declaration ; and it is no wonder if such passages failed to produce any strong impression upon the minds of the people in general. Living in the visible presence of the Almighty, and under his immediate guidance, relying on his protection, and trembling at his judgments, it is no wonder that they should have been occupied with the present life, and that they should have been without any strong presentiment of the future. "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord ; let him do with me what seemeth him good : " such would be the child-like feeling, the implicit confidence of the faithful but unenlightened Jew. He believed so much, and so much only as was expressly revealed to him. The glory of an express Revelation may well have extinguished in his breast the dim and doubtful light of Natural Religion.

But though this may have been the case with the people in general, we cannot doubt there were some individuals, some chosen servants of God, who looked forward to a heavenly inheritance. They were enabled to perceive that the Mosaic institutions, however

glorious, were only a dispensation of death, having no promise beyond the present life. They had faith and forecast of mind to anticipate another dispensation which was "rather glorious." It is declared in the Epistle to the Hebrews¹, that "Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And still more clearly it is said of the Patriarchs, that "these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon earth;" and it is added, "they desired a better country, even a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." They sought a country, *i.e.* a place where they would no longer be strangers and pilgrims; but the country which they sought was a better one than any they could find on earth, *i.e.* a heavenly one, a "city which hath foundations," a "continuing city." To them, as to us, the promised land was a type of the heavenly Canaan, the ceremonies of the law were shadows of good things to come. They did not "look only for temporary promises."

¹ Heb. xi. 10, &c.

Again, if we consider the inspired meditations of David and Solomon, we can hardly fail to see the hope of a future and a better life, not indeed expressed so fully, so clearly, and so frequently, as it would be in the devotions of a Christian saint, but still appearing at intervals, and running like a golden thread through the tissue of those divine compositions. Thus the Psalmist exclaimed, in a transport of holy desire, "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell; neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou shalt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore¹;" and again, "As for me, I will behold thy presence in righteousness; and when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it²;" and again, "God hath delivered my soul from the place of hell; for he shall receive me³;" and again, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory⁴:" and it is one of the proverbs of the wisest of men, that "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death⁵." Such passages occur very frequently; and though, when taken

¹ Ps. xvi.² Ps. xvii.³ Ps. xlix.⁴ Ps. lxxiii.⁵ Prov. xiv. 32.

separately, they may each by possibility be interpreted in some lower sense, yet when collected together, they are too numerous and too strong to be entirely explained away.

It must, however, be admitted that even these inspired saints of the Old Testament were not always able to contemplate with steady and unfailing eye the glories of the future life. When they considered their own infirmity and the weakness of the flesh, they appear to have had their misgivings, and they enquired in a doubtful tone, "Shall the dust give thanks unto thee; or shall it declare thy truth¹?" "Dost thou shew wonders among the dead; or shall the dead rise up again and praise thee? Shall thy wondrous works be known in the dark; and thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten²?" How touching are the lamentations of David over the bodies of Saul and Jonathan: "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided....Ye daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet with other delights ...How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!...I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me....How are the mighty

¹ Psal. xxx. 10.

² And so Eccles. ix. 5.

fallen, and the weapons of war perished¹.” But if David had enjoyed the full light of the Gospel, he would doubtless have mingled with those strains of grief some thoughts of the Resurrection, some anticipations of the day when the “saying shall be brought to pass that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory².” How sublime is the prayer of Solomon which he offered at the dedication of the temple³. How carefully he enumerates each temporal calamity that could possibly befall the nation, and prays that if they repaired to that holy temple, and sought the Lord in their distress, he would hear them from heaven his dwelling-place. But if that temple had been a Christian church, and Solomon a Christian king, he would surely have contemplated not only the temporal but the eternal interests of his people. And upon the whole we must say, that although these prophets and kings obtained some glimpses through the veil which was on the hearts of the Jewish people, yet even they were not able altogether to lift the veil. And as with regard to other matters, so also with respect to the doctrine of a future life, the words of our Saviour hold good, which he spake to his disciples: “Many

¹ 2 Sam. i. 17.

² 1 Cor. xv. 54.

³ 2 Chron. vi. 14, &c.

prophets and kings have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them ; and to hear these things which ye hear, and have not heard them¹."

The times of this ignorance lasted until the Babylonish Captivity. Previous to that epoch, the belief in a future life appears to have been as it were in abeyance. Not having been embodied in the Mosaic law, it lost its hold on the popular mind, and as a motive of action it was superseded and displaced by the more immediate and powerful motives, by the temporal rewards and punishments of the Mosaic dispensation. It was however entertained as a great article of religious faith by the patriarchs ; and it was occasionally the theme of rapturous anticipation to the royal psalmist and the royal preacher.

But after the captivity a great change is perceptible in the Jewish polity. The Mosaic dispensation was indeed restored, but not in all its fulness. The temple was rebuilt, but the old men wept when they contrasted the meanness of the latter house with the glory of the former. The ark of the covenant was not there. The Most High dwelt no more in visible presence between the cherubim. The Urim and Thummim gave forth no intima-

¹ Luke x. 24.

tions of the divine will. The especial and miraculous superintendence of God's providence was by degrees withdrawn. The system of temporal rewards and punishments was relaxed¹. The spirit of prophecy lingered for a while, and then departed; disappearing as the last star from the firmament, when the night is far spent, and the day is at hand. But before this last token of the Mosaic Covenant was withdrawn, signs and tokens were given, more and more distinct, of the new dispensation. As the promise of the life which now is became fainter, the promise of the life which is to come was more clearly divulged. At the very time when the Jews appeared to have entirely lost the favour of God, to have exhausted his patience, and to be cast out from his presence, in their distress and in their captivity, fresh promises were made to them of the Messiah, and a new hope was opened to them, even the hope of the heavenly Sion. The system of temporal rewards and punishments was relaxed; but lest they should suppose that God had ceased to reward them that seek him, or that vengeance no longer belonged to him, the Prophet Daniel

¹ This appears (as Bp. Warburton has shewn, *Div. Leg.* v. 5.) from Jer. xxxi. 29. Ezek. xviii. 2. To which may be added Luke xvi. 25.

was commissioned to speak of the judgment to come : and he declared¹ that “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and contempt.” And now the presentiment of a future retribution was quickened and stirred up in the Jewish nation. They no longer formed an exception in this respect to the rest of mankind. We have seen that this persuasion, though a deep principle of our nature, had been set aside and superseded in God’s chosen people, by a peculiar dispensation of his providence. But henceforth it was not confined to patriarchs and prophets, it became a popular and prevailing belief². It became not a mere speculative opinion, but at least in some cases a powerful motive of action. We read in the Second Book of the Maccabees, of seven brethren who were slain one after another, each declaring his faith that the King of the world would raise them up unto everlasting life who had died in defence of his laws. “They were tortured,” as the Apostle says of them in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

Moreover, the Gospel history itself makes it manifest that the doctrine of a future judg-

¹ Dan. xii. 2.

² 2 Macc. vii. Heb. xi. 35.

ment was not for the first time promulgated among the Jews by the teaching of our Lord. It was already established, or at least it was generally received, when he came. This is evident from the manner in which he taught it, and from the allusions which he made to it. He did not at the outset of his ministry formally announce the future judgment, any more than he formally preached the existence of a God. But he turned to that doctrine as a subject familiar to his hearers. The Sermon on the Mount is the earliest of his public discourses. At the commencement of it he declares the blessedness of those who shall endure persecution for his sake, inasmuch as their reward shall be great in heaven. He does not first say that there is to be a future state of rewards and punishments; but he assumes that to be already known and believed. At other times he condescends to use the terms which were employed by the Jews in their endeavours to form some conception of the places beyond the grave. He speaks of Abraham's bosom, and of Paradise, of the Gehenna of fire, and of the outer darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. The existence of such terms, and the familiar and incidental manner in which they are used by our Lord, is a sufficient proof

that some belief in a future retribution was already established among the Jews.

But here, as elsewhere, error was mingled with the truth. The Jews, no less than the Gentiles, were misled by their own vain conceits. We learn from Josephus¹, that some of the Rabbis, while they claimed the Resurrection for the righteous, denied it to the wicked; in opposition to whom St. Paul asserts the resurrection both of the just and unjust²; of the just unto life, and of the unjust unto condemnation. Some maintained merely a carnal resurrection; others merely a spiritual one; whereas we are taught, that both the body shall be “raised in incorruption,” and the spirit shall be “made perfect.” Another party held the specious doctrine of transmigration; saying, that when the soul has been released from one body, it enters into another, and so from time to time reappears upon earth. They did not know that “it is appointed unto men *once* to die—once only—but after this the judgment.” In the meanwhile a sect was not wanting, which, like the heathen philosophers of whom we treated in our last Discourse, rejected all these conceits, as mere human invention and tradi-

¹ See note at the end of this Lecture, p. 132.

² Acts xxiv. 15.

tion, and discerned not the truth which was the groundwork of them all. The Sadducees are represented as denying any resurrection, and any spiritual existence whatever. Thus while the Pharisee was making void the word of God by his traditions, the Sadducee was equally making it void by his unbelief. And thus we trace the workings of the human imagination and the human reason, less daring indeed and less developed than we have seen them in the heathen world, but still proceeding in the same path, and arriving at nearly the same results of superstition on the one hand and infidelity on the other. And as to the practical effects of the doctrine, though men might sometimes be greatly encouraged and ennobled by it, as was the case with the Maccabean brothers, we have no reason to think that this was generally the case. On the contrary, those very men who were loudest in talking about a future life, appear to have been most backward in seeking it. It is against the Pharisees, the believers in a resurrection, that our Lord denounces his heaviest woes: “¹ Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye

¹ Matt. xxiii. 13.

them that are entering to go in." And we may conclude that this doctrine was not esteemed a fundamental article of religion, since the Sadducees who denied it appear to have been admissible even to the highest office of the priesthood¹.

If then the question be asked, What advantage had the Jew as concerning the knowledge of a future life? we must answer that he had none. For before the Babylonish Captivity, the Mosaic law held out to him temporal motives, temporal rewards and punishments, which had the effect of shutting out the future world from his thoughts; meeting with retribution in this life, he did not look for it in another; and he had even less idea of a future state than the heathen nations had by whom he was surrounded. And after the Captivity, when those temporal motives were withdrawn, and by the declarations of the prophets his thoughts were directed to the prospect of another life, he did not rightly profit by those declarations, but fell into the very snares by which the Gentiles were deceived. To the Jew indeed was confided the custody of the Oracles of God; but those oracles he could not interpret: he was not with-

¹ Acts v. 17: "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees."

out a suspicion, that in the Scriptures he possessed the word of eternal life; but he could not tell how, for the veil was on his heart. He kept indeed the treasure which was committed to his hands, but he could not unlock it, nor turn it to its proper use. And such was his blindness, that he perceived not, when the Master came, and unlocked the treasure, and gave it to the world. He little thought that those Scriptures, which he so greatly revered, gave testimony of One whom he despised and mocked and persecuted unto death. He little thought that Jesus of Nazareth, in bursting open the gates of the tomb, would also open the secrets of those Scriptures, and bring to light the mystery which they contained—the mystery which had been hidden from the foundation of the world. He little thought that in after times men would look back and see that “the Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ¹.”

With regard then to the knowledge of a future life, the Jew stood on no vantage-

¹ Art. VII. Bishop Bull, *Diss.* Post. x. 8. “Lex carnaliter et secundum literam spectata nec spiritualem justitiam exegit, nec vitam æternam promisit: spiritualiter vero considerata erat ipsissimum evangelium.”

ground over the Gentile—and if before the coming of Christ, the middle wall of partition had been broken down, and the Jew had been commanded to go forth, and teach all nations, having only the Old Testament Scriptures in his hand, he would never have convinced the world of the true doctrine of the Resurrection, for he was not himself in possession of that doctrine. He might have brought men to acknowledge the unity and the holiness of God; he might have persuaded them to forsake their idols, and to turn unto the living God; and this indeed he did in the case of many Gentile proselytes who conformed to the Mosaic law. But he could never have kindled the faith which lights up the darkness of the tomb, the sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the dead. He must have let *that* alone for ever.

Such was the dispensation under which the Jewish people lived; an incomplete Revelation, but destined to introduce one that was complete. In itself it was unable to confer righteousness, and it gave no promise of the life eternal. Had it been able to offer the one, it would have given the other. “If,” as the Apostle says, “there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law¹.” The

¹ Gal. iii. 21. Bull, *Harm. Ap.* Diss. Post. x. 6.

same law which held out to men the prospect of living hereafter with God, would also have enabled them to attain that blessed prospect; it would have shewn them the means of arriving at that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord. It would have told them how their sins, though they were as scarlet, might be washed white as snow; how the robes of innocence might be purchased, without money and without price, those unsullied robes in which we must appear at the marriage-feast. This the Jewish law did not profess to do. It was silent as to the future life; it was silent as to the means of sanctification by which we must be fitted for that future life. It was but a preparation, a discipline, or, as the Apostle terms it, a "schoolmaster to bring men unto Christ¹." It enjoined ordinances the meaning of which it did not explain; it kept back truths which were afterwards to be revealed. All this system has indeed passed away; and yet in some sense it endures; the counterpart of it may be found in this life of ours, and in our condition here upon earth. For this our life is a preparation and a discipline; and as such it is full of mysteries which are not understood, of hopes which are not satis-

¹ Gal. iii. 24.

fied ; mysteries and hopes, the trials and encouragements of our faith. If we regard it in its true light, and use it for the purpose for which it was intended, we shall find that it is the “schoolmaster which brings us unto Christ;” a probation in which all our affections are tried and chastised and subdued, and made subordinate to the will of God. And as the first coming of Christ accomplished the expectation of the Jews, and shed a light on the types and ceremonies of the Law, so will his second coming fulfil the yearnings of our nature, and explain all that now seems unaccountable in the government of the world. It may be that we shall then look back upon this transitory scene, this “dispensation of death,” and perceive it to have been a system of types and symbols, by which we were unconsciously tutored and instructed. Let us not then repine and rebel against God’s providence, as the Jews sometimes rebelled against the law of Moses, and perished in the wilderness. But let us take in good part the visitations of the Lord, not doubting that they are intended for our benefit, and that though now we know not what he doeth, we shall know hereafter. For the present it is a great thing to be assured, and it is an assurance which was not vouch-

safed to the Jews, that though “our days are gone as a shadow¹,” they are not altogether vanity, but they are the “shadow of good things to come;” the shadow of a substance which endureth, and which will be revealed hereafter—and though our life is “a vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away²,” it vanisheth away from earth, that it may be caught up into heaven, and appear for ever there.

¹ A frequent comparison in the Old Testament. See 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Job viii. 9, &c.

² James iv. 14.

NOTE ON LECTURE IV.

THE subject discussed in the preceding Lecture is one of considerable interest, and not free from difficulty. The conclusions to which I have been led in the consideration of it may be briefly stated as follows :—

I. The Books of Moses, though they contain intimations of another life, do not expressly reveal it.

II. The expectation of a future state of rewards and punishments, so far as we can judge from the Books of the Old Testament, did not form part of the *popular belief* of the Jews, before the Babylonish Captivity ; but

III. It did form part of the faith of many saints and patriarchs previous to that epoch ; and

IV. After that epoch it was expressly revealed by the prophets, and came to be commonly believed by the people.

This view will, I think, be found generally in accordance with that maintained by Bishop Bull, *Harmon. Apostol.* Diss. post. cap. x.

I. That there is no *express Revelation* of a future life in the Pentateuch, is agreed by the greatest divines both in ancient and modern times, by St. Chrysostom, St. Augustin, Bishop Bull, Barrow, &c. St. Chrysostom speaks very strongly when he says that in the Jewish law “there was no account of heavenly things, no mention of the things to come,” *περὶ οὐρανίων οὐδεπότε λόγος ἦν, οὐδὲ μελλόντων μνήμη.* (*ad. Olymp. B.*)

The only *intimation* of a future life, which we can

quote with certainty, is Exod. iii. 15, 16: "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," referred to by our Lord in Luke xx. 37. Other passages have been supposed to admit of the same application; but they cannot be relied on so strongly, as they are not clear in themselves, and are not applied to a future life by any inspired authority. Such passages are Gen. i. 27: "God created man in his own image;" this, it is said, would be understood to mean that God made man immortal. Gen. v. 24: Enoch "was not; for God took him." This implies that Enoch was taken to another state of existence, and hence, it is said, the Jews might infer that *all* men are to live hereafter. Deut. xxxii. 29: "O that they would consider their latter end," *i. e.* that they would consider the things that are to happen to them after death.—See Euseb. *Præp. Ev.* xi. 27; Graves *On the Pentateuch*, Part III. Sect. iv.

The intimations of a future state, which we discover in the Pentateuch, appear in one respect to be on the same footing with the *types* of the Mosaic law; they were not intelligible until they were explained by Christ. And in both cases the same rule seems to be applicable; we cannot say for certain that any thing in the Pentateuch is either a type of Christ, or an intimation of a future state, unless it is recognised as such in the New Testament.

II. I have proved in Lecture II., that the expectation of a future retribution has been an article of popular belief in the heathen world.—It would have been more in harmony with this view, and with my own prepossessions, had I proceeded to shew, in Lecture IV., that the same belief prevailed generally among the Jews. But I have been unable to do this.—Though we have the sacred

writings of that people, illustrating minutely their customs and opinions, treating especially of religious subjects, and extending over many centuries, we do not find, either in the Books of the Law, or in the Historical Books, any phrases, practices, or familiar allusions, testifying to the existence of the belief in question.—No inference, I think, can be drawn from the Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל *Sheol*, the interior of the earth, the grave, Deut. xxxii. 22; Numb. xvi. 30; Job xvii. 13; Ps. xvi. 10, Lxxxix. 48, &c. (see Taylor's *Hebrew Concordance*; Barrow, *Sermon* xxviii. Vol. II.) nor from the common phrase “he was gathered to his people;” *i. e.* he was buried, Gen. xxv. 8; Numb. xxvii. 13, &c. And the practice of necromancy, forbidden by Moses (Levit. xix. 31), but resorted to by Saul (1 Sam. xxviii.), is not sufficient, without other evidence, to shew that the Jewish nation in general, before the captivity, believed in a future state of rewards and punishments. The allusions, phrases, and practices, which prove the existence of this belief in the time of our Lord, are noticed in the Lecture, pp. 117—120.

So far as we have the means of judging, it would appear that in this, as in many other respects, God's peculiar people formed an exception to the rest of the world; that part of natural religion, which relates to a future state, having perhaps in their case been thrown into the shade by the superior brilliancy and distinctness of the Mosaic dispensation; as I have suggested in the Lecture, p. 110.

III. Many patriarchs and good men under the law, looked forward to a future state.—Some of the passages which have been quoted in proof of this assertion (*e. g.* by Bp. Bull, *Serm.* I.) may be explained on the hypothesis that the idea of Restoration from Death is used figura-

tively, to denote deliverance from temporal calamity.—See Bishop Warburton, *Div. Leg.* Book v. § 5, &c. Hengstenberg on the Psalms.—But there are many passages, especially those quoted in the Lecture, (p. 112) which could not, on any fair principles of interpretation, be so explained, even if we had not the authority of Holy Scripture (Heb. xi.) for saying that many Old Testament saints did look forward to “a better country, to wit, a heavenly.”

It may be observed, that I have not quoted in this behalf the passage of Job (xix. 25, 26) ; which is thus rendered in the English Version ; “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

As Job appears to have been a native of Egypt or Arabia, he could not properly be included in a list of Jewish patriarchs. Moreover, after much consideration of the passage, I cannot but agree with those expositors who consider that Job was here anticipating not his Resurrection from the grave, but his Restoration to health, prosperity, and God’s favour ; for

1. The English Version is not a literal translation of the original ; which may be thus rendered ; “I know that my redeemer (or avenger) liveth, and that at the last he shall stand upon the dust ; and that after this my skin shall have been pierced through, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” This was literally fulfilled when God appeared to Job (“now mine eye seeth thee,” xlii. 5,) and “turned his captivity” (xlii. 10.)

The version of the LXX. is neither close to the original, nor clear in itself ; it is however quoted by St Clement of Rome (1 *Epist. ad Cor.* 26,) as shewing that Job

believed in the resurrection; οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι αἰνάός ἐστιν ὁ ἐκλύειν με μέλλων, ἐπὶ γῆς ἀναστῆσαι τὸ δέσμα μου, τὸ ἀναντλοῦν ταῦτα: “I know that he who shall deliver me is eternal, so that he can restore upon the earth my skin, which endureth these things.”

2. If the passage has reference to the Resurrection of the body, it is not only the most ancient, but the most remarkable and striking acknowledgment of that doctrine in the Old Testament. Yet it was overlooked by the ancient Jewish teachers, it is not noticed by our Lord or his Apostles, nor by any Christian writer except St Clement (mentioned above), for nearly four centuries. St Chrysostom more than once says, that Job was not acquainted with the doctrine of the Resurrection, (*ad Olymp.* β. 8. Ἰὼβ, δίκαιος ὢν, καὶ περὶ ἀναστάσεως ἐπιστάμενος οὐδέν, and *Homil. in Matt.* xxxiii. 7, quoting Job vii. 16). But the evangelical interpretation of the passage having been admitted by St Jerome into the Latin Vulgate, obtained universal currency, and appears to have remained without question till the Reformation. Since that period, the original Hebrew has been examined, and found not to bear out the received version; and the opinion of St Chrysostom, St Ambrose, and Maimonides, that a temporal restoration only was signified, has been adopted by Grotius, Le Clerc, Patrick, Bishop Warburton, Jahn, Archbishop Whateley, &c.

3. It has also been alleged, that a profession of faith in the Resurrection, expressed in this single passage, would not be in keeping with the general tenor of the book, nor with the line of argument adopted on either side by the interlocutors in the dialogue. There is some force in this observation, yet it is not in itself conclusive; for Job, speaking under inspiration, might declare a truth,

the full force of which was not appreciated by his friends, nor even by himself. (This at least appears to have been sometimes the case with the Prophets.)

IV. We learn the opinions of some of the Pharisees from Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* II. viii. 14 : "They say that every soul is immortal, but that only the souls of the good transmigrate into another body, while those of the wicked are chastised with eternal punishment." ψυχὴν δὲ πᾶσαι μὲν ἀφθαρτον, μεταβαίνειν δὲ εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν μόνην, τὴν δὲ τῶν φαύλων αἰδίῳ τιμωρίᾳ κολάζεσθαι. See also *Ant. Jud.* XVIII. i. 3. Euseb. *Præp. Ev.* IX. 3. Pearson, *On the Creed*, Art. XI. ad fin. Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, II. 9. Philo held the pre-existence and transmigration of souls. *De Somniis*, p. 586. B. Ed. Paris, 1640 : ἀὴρ οἷα πόλις ἐν-ανδρεί, πολίτας ἀφθάρτους καὶ ἀθανάτους ἔχων ψυχὰς, ἰσαριθμούς ἄστροις. τούτων τῶν ψυχῶν, αἱ μὲν κατίασιν ἐνδεθισόμεναι σώμασι θνητοῖς, ὅσαι προσγειόταται καὶ φιλοσώματοι, αἱ δ' ἀνέρχονται δια-κριθεῖσαι πάλιν κατὰ τοὺς ὑπὸ φύσεως ὀρισθέντας ὀρισμούς καὶ χρόνους. τούτου αἱ μὲν τὰ σύντροπα καὶ συνήθη τοῦ βίου ποθοῦσαι παλινδρομοῦσιν αὖθις· αἱ δὲ πολλὴν φλυαρίαν αὐτοῦ καταγνοῦσαι, δεσμοπήριον μὲν καὶ τυμβὸν ἐκάλεσαν τὸ σῶμα, φυγοῦσαι δ' ὥσπερ ἐξ εἰρκτῆς ἢ μνήματος, ἄνω κουφοῖς πτεροῖς πρὸς αἰθέρα ἐξαρθεῖσαι μετεωροπολοῦσι τὸν αἰῶνα.

LECTURE V.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

2 TIMOTHY I. 10.

The appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

OUR attention was directed last Sunday to the condition of the Jewish nation, with respect to the knowledge of a future life; and the conclusions at which we then arrived are such as we should scarcely have anticipated. They shew that the ways of God are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. We should hardly have expected to find in the books of Moses a Revelation, undoubtedly genuine, holding out prominently the rewards and punishments of this present life, but laying no stress on a future retribution. We should hardly have expected to see in the Jewish nation, a people living under the special Providence and superintendence of God, yet limiting their thoughts to this world, and, with the exception of some in-

spired patriarchs and saints, not looking for another. That such, however, was the case with the Jewish people during the first portion of their history, appears probable from the brief survey which we have been able to take of this part of the subject. And did our limits permit us to go further into the question, our conclusions might be confirmed by a critical examination of various texts of Scripture, and by the authority of the principal Fathers of the Christian Church in ancient and modern times.

We cannot do otherwise than acknowledge, that the Mosaic institutions contained no express and positive declaration of a judgment after death, or indeed of any state of existence beyond the grave. The people in general lived, so far as we are able to see, in apprehension of those temporal judgments of God, by means of which they were governed in an especial manner; but they had no promise, they had no belief, and it does not appear that they entertained any speculations, respecting a life beyond the grave. We do not find in the historical books of the Old Testament any thing which could lead us to suppose that the common people were actuated by any hopes or fears as to their condition after death. To them the present was made

so glorious and so awful by the visible majesty of the Most High, that they could not divert their gaze from it, and look away into the darkness of the future. Some patriarchs and saints indeed there were, as we learn particularly from the Epistle to the Hebrews, who lived and died in the sure and certain hope of a better country than any that could be found on earth ; and we can hardly read the Psalms of David, or the writings of Solomon, without being persuaded that those holy men were at least sometimes inspired with hopes of the same nature. But it is not until after the Babylonish captivity, when the Mosaic law began to be relaxed, that we find these hopes springing up in the people at large ; in consequence, as it seems, of the declarations which were made by the prophets, especially by the prophet Daniel. When we come down to the time of our Lord's advent, and consider the expressions which we find in the Gospel history, and in the writings of Jewish authors, such as Josephus and Philo, we perceive that the belief in a future retribution was in that age generally established ; though as a doctrine it was not more pure, and as a motive not more effectual, than the notions on this subject which we have seen prevailing in the heathen world. It was not regarded as a fun-

damental religious truth; it bore no fruit in the lives of those who most loudly professed it. True it is that "in Jewry was God known, and his name was great in Israel;" but neither in Jewry, nor out of it, was there any certain and saving knowledge of the things which shall hereafter happen to the body and soul of man. The word of life had yet to be spoken. The light had yet to appear, before which the darkness should for ever flee away.

What then is the privilege of our high calling as Christians? What is that ray of light and warmth which has been shed abroad in our hearts? I trust that the heart of every one who hears me is able to respond to this question, and that the answer is inwardly made by all, before it can be spoken by me. Yet it will be profitable to dwell upon this question and its answer, and to consider the principal points in which the Gospel Revelation has thrown a fresh light upon our future destiny.

We have to enquire in what sense it is true that Christ brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Of course, after all that has been said in my preceding discourses, we shall not suppose that the future life was now for the first time promulgated as a new subject for the contemplation and the

faith of mankind. In reviewing the opinions of the heathen world I have shewn reason for believing, that one article of natural and primitive Religion was the expectation of a future state. When by the commission of sin man had shut himself out from the light of God's presence, this belief appears to have been set to rule the gloomy night of the ages which ensued. It became in process of time greatly obscured, and shorn of its beams ; yet it continued to send a feeble ray into men's hearts until the day dawned, and the day-star arose. And although among the Jews this belief appears to have been cast into the shade by the brightness of the Mosaic dispensation, yet even with them we have found it generally prevailing at the time of our Lord's appearing. But both among Jews and Gentiles it had need to be illuminated and lit up afresh by some new manifestation : and by doing this Christ "brought it to light."

And how did he establish this great truth? Did he seek by subtlety of arguments to convince the reason? Did he found his doctrine of a future life on any physical theory of the soul, or on an appeal to the analogies of nature? He placed it on no such foundation. So far as argument is concerned, the subject remains where it was, and we are no nearer

to a philosophical demonstration than we were before. He addressed himself not to the reason, but to the faith of man. And this he did in two ways, according to the diversity of his two natures.

I. He proclaimed the doctrine by the authority of his Godhead, and

II. He illustrated it by the example of his manhood.

I. One of the heathen¹ philosophers, as I reminded you in a former lecture, left no stone unturned in his endeavours to demonstrate the immortality of the soul; but so ill satisfied was he with the result of his speculations, that he confessed the truth could only be known if some God should vouchsafe to declare it. That evidence after which he ignorantly yearned, was now actually supplied. God spoke to man by his Son, and declared the life of the world to come. "In my Father's house," said our Lord, "are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also²." Thus he spoke, as one having authority, and not like the philosophers of the heathen, or the scribes of the Jewish world.

¹ Plato : see Lecture III.

² Joh. xiv. 2.

And if the style and manner of his speaking were such as became one that had authority, he proved that the authority was not usurped, that it was no robbery for him to make himself equal with God; for he manifested himself to be the Son of God *with power*, that is, by the exercise of miraculous power, by performing many miracles, and above all, by one great act of omnipotence, namely, by raising up his human nature from the dead¹.

II. By raising up his human nature he not only made a demonstration of his Godhead, but he at the same time exemplified the great doctrine which he preached, namely, the doctrine of the Resurrection. The heathen world had always lent a willing ear to the fables which pretended to relate how some favoured mortal had been permitted to return from the world of spirits. One of the most attractive of these fables was invented by the heathen philosopher², the advocate of a future life, to whom I have just referred. It purported to be the account given by an individual who had returned to life some few days after his decease. It would seem that an instance of this kind was wanting to give men confidence in the reality of that unseen world from which no traveller retraced his

¹ Rom. i. 3.

² Plat. *De Repub.* Lib. x.

path. It would seem that the words of the rich man in the parable represented the craving of human nature in general; "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent¹." Even this blind longing of mankind was not left unsatisfied. Ought it not to have sufficed that God had spoken, and declared the life to come? Yet in pity to our weakness he did more than this. He who took the flesh and bore the sorrows, and died the death of man, came again from the dead, and "shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs²." Undoubtedly this great victory over the grave was so ordered as to be the accomplishment not of one purpose only, but of the manifold counsels of God. I have already observed that our Lord was thereby declared to be the Son of God; a proof was given of his divine nature. Moreover, as he was delivered to death to make atonement for our sins, so he rose again for our justification³; and thus the scheme of our redemption was completed. But in the third place, his rising is an assurance that we shall rise; his victory is a pledge of ours. This is no inference of human reason; no pious but fanciful deduc-

¹ Luke xvi. 30.

² Acts i. 3.

³ Rom. iv. 25.

tion in which the wish suggests the thought. It is the declaration, oftentimes repeated, of the holy Apostles. Thus St Peter says, that "God has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away¹." And St Paul declares that "having been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies;" and they shall be "fashioned like unto his glorious body²." He overcame the sharpness of death *for us*, and opened the gates of heaven to all believers. His resurrection is represented as a precedent, which will have a goodly following; as the firstfruits of a harvest which is to be. In itself, indeed, it is but a single event, vouched by unimpeachable witnesses, men who, strange to say, laid down their lives in attestation of it. But why did they lay down their lives? Not merely because they knew the fact to be true, but because, being true, it was a pledge that they themselves should live, though they died. They were *authorised* to treat it thus, to regard it, and to preach it,

¹ 1 Pet. i. 3.

² Rom. vi. 5, viii. 11; Phil. iii. 21.

not simply as an isolated fact, but as an example, as a pledge to themselves and all mankind. Even if they had not been so authorised, and if the resurrection of Christ had been set forth by them, and received by the world as a well-attested and unquestionable, but isolated fact, it would still perhaps have been regarded as a precedent; men would have been ready to draw conclusions from it, and to see in his victory some hope for themselves. It would perhaps, even so, have had more weight to persuade men of a general resurrection, than the most elaborate theories and reasonings of philosophy. So apt are the bulk of mankind to draw general conclusions from individual instances. We are not however left to reason about the matter for ourselves. To us the majestic fact of the resurrection of Christ, though it stands alone in the history of the world, is as good as ten thousand instances; to us it is the grand *experimentum crucis*; for we are assured, upon no less authority than that of God himself, that it is the example of an universal truth.

From these observations, then, it is apparent that our Lord first proclaimed the future life with the authority of his Godhead, and afterwards illustrated it by the example of his manhood risen from the dead; thus satisfying,

in two respects, the earnest expectation of human nature, which had hitherto sought in vain either for an adequate authority on the subject, or for a certain example. But there is a word, which I have already had occasion to use more than once,—a word expressing a very important doctrine, to which we must now more particularly advert. We speak of the *Resurrection* of Christ, and of our own Resurrection. By this we mean the complete restoration of our nature after death; the body being revived, and made incorruptible, and for ever united to the pure and perfect spirit. That the body shall rise again, is the doctrine, as I need hardly remind you, not only of the Apostles, but of Christ himself. “The hour is coming,” he says¹, “when all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth.” Here, of course, the resurrection of the *body* is declared; for the soul lodges not in the grave, and therefore cannot come forth from it; the soul goes to another place, that place which our Lord, when he was himself about to visit it, called “a paradise,”—a garden of delights. Our Lord therefore declared, in brief and solemn terms, that the body should rise again. And I need not remind you how this truth

¹ Joh. v. 28.

was illustrated by His Apostles, especially by St Paul in that chapter which is read, as a triumphal song, over the body of the departed Christian : “ The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality¹. ” But to the heathen world the doctrine appears to have been altogether new. The heathen, indeed, for the most part, supposed that they should retain their personal identity after death, in some shadowy world : but that the identity would be corporeal as well as spiritual, that the dry bones should live, that the mortal should put on immortality, was an idea which entered not into the contemplation of gentile poet, priest, or philosopher. It does not appear to have been asserted or denied, or in any way mooted among them. Some learned writers in modern times have endeavoured to view the Egyptian custom of embalming in connexion with this idea ; as if the bodies were thus carefully preserved among that people, in expectation that the souls would one day return to them. But this conjecture is supported by no evidence or authority, and is at variance with what we know of the actual opinions of the Egyptians.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 52.

It was their belief, as I have shewn on a former occasion¹, that only the souls of the wicked would be sent back to this world, for punishment and purification; and these were at first to assume the form of the inferior animals, and eventually to take the human shape, but not to return to the original bodies, nor to be the same men as they were before. And if we trace the doctrine of the transmigration of souls through the various countries in which it prevailed, we nowhere find it asserting that the soul should be restored to its former body, that the same man should live again. The words of a great poet of antiquity have been sometimes quoted as a denial of the Resurrection. He asserts that even God has no power to restore the dead; that when the life-blood of a man has once gone down into the dust, he will never rise again. "For the dead," he says, "there is no *anastasis*²." But the thing here contemplated by Æschylus is not a resurrection in a future life, but a restoration to the present. If a man is once killed, he cannot, even by divine power, be brought back to life. Even in this sense, however, the assertion was untrue, and has been disproved

¹ Lecture II. p. 33 (and Note, p. 53).

² Æsch. *Eumen.* 617:

ἀνδρὸς δ' ἐπειδὴν αἶμ' ἀνασπάσῃ κόνις,
ἅπαξ θανόντος οὔτις ἔστ' ἀνάστασις, κ. τ. λ.

by the mighty works of our blessed Lord. He raised the dead by his word—"Talitha cumi;" "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise;" "Lazarus, come forth." Thus he gave the word, and it was done. The dead heard the voice of the Son of Man, and lived again. Thus he swept away the limitations which the heathen presumed to place on the divine power, he shewed that in this, as in other respects, with God all things are possible.

The Christian idea of a Resurrection did not exist among the heathen, and they never used the word *anastasis* in the sense which we attach to it. When the Apostle came to Athens, and encountered the various schools of philosophy, he was pronounced to be a setter-forth of strange gods, because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. The word *anastasis*, as he used it, was new to them; and the explanation which St Chrysostom gives is not improbable, that they took it to be the name of a new Divinity. And when he enlarged upon this doctrine in the speech upon Mars' hill, they ridiculed him for propounding a theory which appeared to be contrary to the laws of nature, and physically impossible¹.

The Resurrection of the Body, therefore, like the doctrine of the Atonement, was to

¹ Acts xvii. 18, 32.

the Greeks foolishness ; it was also to the Jews a stumbling-block. It gave rise to the earliest persecution which assailed the Christian Church. The Apostles were first haled before the Jewish Sanhedrim for preaching through Jesus the resurrection of the dead¹. And though the Jews were not all of the same mind on the subject, and there was a dissension between Pharisee and Sadducee, which the Apostle Paul on one occasion turned to his advantage², yet it is plain that even the Pharisee did not hold the same notion of a resurrection, or anything like the same notion, which was promulgated by our Lord and his disciples. The Pharisees did indeed acknowledge a resurrection, as we learn from several passages in the New Testament ; but a competent witness, namely, one of their own writers, Josephus, has informed us what was the nature of that resurrection ; and it appears to have been not very different from that which was called in other countries metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. They believed, as we are expressly told, that all souls are immortal, and that the souls of good men, and of these alone, will enter into *another* body, and live again³. According to

¹ Acts iv. 2.

² Acts xxiii. 6.

³ See Note on Lecture IV. p. 132.

them, the soul was to inhabit a new body in this present world, and not the old body in another world. Such was the summit of their expectations; the highest reward of virtue which they were able to imagine,—to be permitted to pass again through this chequered scene of trouble and of joy; and perhaps even this were better than to cease to be. Certainly it is a reward as high as any that man by his own merits could deserve. But this is not the Resurrection of which the Gospel speaks.

It appears, therefore, that the Resurrection of the body, in the sense in which we understand the term, was not anticipated either¹ by Gentile or by Jew. And it was promulgated by our Lord and his disciples, not as a development of natural religion, not as a thing discoverable by human reason, but as a new Revelation. Though, however, it was not supported either by reason or natural religion, it was yet in accordance with some feelings of our nature. Philosophers indeed strove to imagine a future state of purely spiritual enjoyment. But the mass of mankind, though they did not suppose the body

¹ If we may depend on the testimony of Garcilasso (see Note on Lecture II. p. 58), the ancient Peruvians form a singular exception to this remark.

was to rise again, yet never could form any idea of a future life independent of the body. The shape of the body was to survive, which they called the shade. Corporeal pleasures, pains, and occupations, were to be the rewards and punishments of the disembodied spirit. We may say that such views were inconsistent; that they were carnal and degrading; but they were not unnatural. They may after all have been less remote from truth than the dreams of the philosophers. Certain it is, that while the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection was a subject of mockery to the wise and learned, it was embraced by many a simple follower of the Pagan superstition.

But however the heathen world may have been predisposed in favour of this doctrine, or prejudiced against it, it is clearly our duty to receive it with joy and singleness of heart; accepting it because it is certainly revealed by God, and not looking to any other consideration,—not stopping to determine why it is ordained, nor how it will be carried into effect. Neither may we enquire too curiously in what body we shall be raised. It will be, as the Apostle has informed us, a spiritual body, incorruptible, not subject to the infirmities which are inseparable from our present condition. We are assured by our Lord him-

self, that we shall be "as the angels in heaven." And this being so, it cannot be doubted that our appetites and instincts, and whatever belongs to our animal nature, will either be put away altogether, or else refined and spiritualised in a manner which we cannot now conceive.

At present it is impossible for us to tell what we shall be ; but is it a small thing to know, that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him, and that we shall be endued with a body like unto his glorious body ? We shall not resume the lowly garb of our present nature ; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven ;" but we shall be clothed in a vesture fit for the celestial mansions. We shall be free from the pains and imperfections which affect us here ; and yet it may be that some trace of what we have done and suffered in the body will cleave to us, and will modify our future condition, so as to enhance our happiness, not to detract from it : even as the risen body of our Lord still bore marks of those grievous wounds which caused his death. Moreover, he is said by his Apostle to be now in a peculiar manner "touched with a feeling of our infirmities¹ ;" and the reason of this is, that here on

¹ Heb. iv. 15.

earth he was “in all things tempted like as we are.” That is to say, he still retains sympathies arising out of his former conversation in the world. In like manner it may happen to us, that our souls will preserve some impress of their present affections, some consciousness of their earthly joys and sorrows, of their studies and cares and trials; such recollections not diminishing aught from the blessedness of heaven, but rather constituting a part of it; as the mariner who has arrived at the haven where he would be, delights in it the more when he calls to mind the vicissitudes and hardships of the voyage. We are not forbidden to indulge in conjectures of this kind; they are not repugnant to the doctrines of the Gospel, and, as we have just seen, they are rather countenanced than otherwise by the example of our Lord. If modestly entertained, they may serve to elevate and purify our thoughts; but they are not to be made an article of faith, as they have no certain warrant in holy Scripture.

But if the Resurrection of the body was a new doctrine, not heard of either by Jew or Gentile, there was another truth which, as I have shewn in my former Discourses, was generally prevalent, and which Christ portrayed afresh, in striking and awful colours,—

I mean the future judgment. I need not remind you of the descriptions which our Lord and his Apostles have given of the proceedings of the last day. Those descriptions are, no doubt, in many particulars, figurative, and accommodated to our weak and finite conceptions. We learn, however, apart from all that may be considered figurative, these important truths: that on a certain day all mankind will be summoned to appear before the Lord; that this earth will be the judgment-hall, the palace of the great King; for the Son of Man will stand upon it with his angels; and that a reward will be given to the righteous, and a condemnation pronounced on sinners;—a reward and a condemnation which I need not now repeat. Thus the presentiment which men had of a future retribution is more than confirmed; we not only know that it will be, but we are enabled to form a conception of it, no doubt infinitely short of the reality, but still far more lively, and far more awful, than any that men attained to by the efforts of their own imagination.

Yes; the day of doom has been declared, with its momentous sentences of everlasting happiness or woe. But this is not all;—had this been all that was revealed, had the only effect of Christ's coming been to make more

plain the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,—where should we have been found at that day? what ground should we now have for hope? Sensible of their inability to fulfil the requirements of their Judge, mankind would have sat down with dejected heart, and folded their arms in despair. It would have been to little purpose that one came among us pointing to the pinnacles of heaven and the gates of hell, unless he had also opened to us a way by which we might attain the former, and avoid the latter. And this he did,—he shewed us a way; for he was himself the way. Even before he came, men were not altogether unconscious that they were gone astray from God's favour; and some there were who beat about, trying to find a way of reconciliation for themselves. They felt that unless some kind of atonement were made for their sins, and unless their souls were in some way purified, they would not be fit to enter into the heavenly places. Some, therefore, by way of propitiation, offered sacrifice of the blood of bulls and goats; others deluded themselves with the idea of a transmigration of souls, and thought they should be permitted, in some future stage of existence, to undergo penance for their present sins, to cleanse themselves from their pollutions, and to prepare them-

selves for union with God. Others, again, imagined that here in this life they might satisfy the divine wrath by self-inflicted torture of mind and body; and that by cutting themselves off from all intercourse with the world, by rigidly mortifying all the propensities of their nature, they should be able to purify themselves, and keep themselves pure. This notion prevailed in a great part of Asia before the coming of our Lord. But all these devices of men are alike discountenanced by the Gospel. We are assured that neither in this life, nor in any future stage of existence, can a man expiate his sin, or purify his soul. The blood of animals can neither propitiate the favour of God, nor sprinkle the heart of the worshipper. And there is no place beyond the grave where we can make amends for our short-comings here. Of ourselves we can do nothing; but there is one who has already made atonement for us, if we will only apply it to ourselves; and there is one that purifies us, if we will only open our souls to his gracious influence. The chastisement of our sins has not been remitted; but it has been laid upon one able to bear it to the utmost; and thus "a full, perfect, and sufficient satisfaction" has been made. It is true that our own hearts still condemn us; that

punishment remains ; in this life the pangs of repentance are not taken away. But God is greater than our hearts ; and with him there is even now no condemnation for them that believe. Holiness is still required of us ; for without it no man can see the Lord ; and we are unable to make ourselves holy. But there is one that dwelleth in us, who is able to sanctify us ; and these frail bodies of ours have even now a pledge of their immortal destiny, being made the temples of the Holy Ghost. He is within us, sanctifying the motions and thoughts of our hearts. And this he does without requiring us to come out of the world, and betake ourselves to solitude and self-torture : but he accompanies us as we go to and fro about our worldly business, he mingles his divine balsams in the cup of our earthly joys and sorrows. The pursuits, the cares, even the pleasures of this life, are not to be regarded as hindrances to our salvation, but as opportunities by which it is to be promoted. In them we have occasions for exercising the kindly affections and sympathies of our nature, for using the good things of this world without abusing them, for enduring temptation, for resisting the devil, for learning submission to the will of God. Such is the process by which we are to be tempered

and refined and purified, like silver in the fire. And it is the Holy Spirit dwelling in us who carries us safe through this ordeal; that is to say, provided we grieve him not, nor disobey him, but co-operate to the utmost of our power with his godly motions. Such is the scheme of our Redemption;—divine, all-sufficient, applicable to all. If in our case it fails, the default is in ourselves, because we have not accepted the atonement of Christ, nor listened to our ghostly counsellor, but “counted the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of grace¹.”

If, then, we compare the Gospel-scheme with those systems which men devised for the atonement of their sins and the purification of their souls, we perceive at once this grand distinction,—that by the Gospel our happiness is not made to depend entirely on ourselves, on our own works and deservings. Help has been laid upon One mighty to save; even upon him who was called Jesus, “because he should save his people from their sins.” And there is, besides, a Spirit dwelling in us, who helpeth our infirmities, the Spirit of adoption, “whereby we cry Abba, Father².” Yet, while we thus walk in a strength which is not our own, our own exer-

¹ Heb. x. 29.

² Rom. viii. 15, 26.

tions are by no means superseded, but are required as the necessary condition of our salvation. The assistance which is given us is of no avail, without our own hearty concurrence and co-operation. At every step of our pilgrimage we have heavenly guidance ; but to us is left the option, and the responsibility, of accepting or rejecting that guidance, of walking after the Spirit or after the flesh.

There is also another contrast between the scheme of the Gospel and those conceits of men which we have just been noticing. For these, as we have seen, went upon the supposition that it was impossible for a man to become pure while he had his conversation in this world. Either he must retire from all intercourse with men, and break all earthly ties, and so live as if he were no longer of the world ; or else, according to another opinion, he must undergo purgation and purification in some future stage of existence. But the Gospel tells us that our purification is to be carried on here,—here, in the midst of our worldly duties and occupations, and joys and sorrows. While, therefore, it gives us a lively apprehension of the life to come, and in some degree draws aside the curtain, and shews us the reality of the things unseen, it also elevates and ennobles this present life, by point-

ing out the relations which exist between the things temporal and the things eternal. It dignifies our tribulations, declaring that through them is the entrance into the kingdom of God. It sanctifies our trials, bidding us count it all joy when we fall into many temptations, knowing this, that the trial of our faith worketh patience, and that before we go hence patience must have her perfect work, —her work must be fully accomplished, so that we “may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing¹.” It bids us follow our earthly calling, and be fervent and abide therein, that so, as the Apostle says, we may at the same time abide with God². In like manner it gives a higher meaning to the ordinary duties and domestic relations, to the natural sympathies and charities of life. It makes not this life a wilderness, and a solitary place; we should rather say that, having found it so, it has caused it to “rejoice and blossom as the rose; to blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing;” giving to it, as the Prophet says, “the glory of Lebanon, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, so that men may see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of their God³.” The wilderness is be-

¹ James i. 4.

² 1 Cor. vii. 20, 24.

³ Isai. xxxv. 1.

come a garden ; and its blossoms are not such as flourish for a day, and then perish for ever ; but they bring forth fruit,—not to all men the same fruit, but to each according to his tillage: to the slothful and careless husbandman, apples of Sodom¹, ashes and corruption ; but to the faithful and diligent, such fruit as endures unto eternal life.

¹ Chrys. *Homil.* VIII. in 1 *Thess.*

LECTURE VI.

THE EVIDENCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION; AN OBJECTION CONSIDERED.

LUKE XVI. 31.

If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

HAVING taken a short review of the notions respecting a future life which prevailed in the world before the publication of Christianity, we proceeded, in my last Lecture, to enquire what light was thrown upon this subject by the Author of our holy Religion. We found that Christ declared a state of retribution after death, in which every one is to be rewarded according to the things done in the body; and he also assured us that the body shall be raised again to participate with the soul in such retribution. In proclaiming the future judgment, he confirmed the universal expectation of mankind; in announcing the resurrection of the body, he introduced a doctrine which, though anticipated by few, if indeed by any, tribes of men before his coming, was altogether in accordance with

the yearnings of our nature. These truths were taught by himself, and by his Apostles, who followed him, without any attempt to demonstrate them according to the principles of human reason,—without condescending either to affirm or to refute any of the theories which philosophers had constructed respecting the nature of the soul of man. So far as the human reason is concerned, the subject has been left where it was before, baffling the penetration, and confounding the ingenuity of man. We may even say that it is more than ever removed from the province of reason, the doctrine of the resurrection having come in, as an additional element, a new theme for wonder, another barrier to our understanding. But Christ addressed himself to the faith rather than to the reason of men, to the moral rather than to the intellectual powers. He displayed his doctrine, and we receive it as a light let down from on high,—a beacon, not erected on any earthly foundation, but slung from the vaults of heaven. And this doctrine having once been promulgated and received, it would have been well for mankind if they had for ever renounced all their former conjectures and doubts and reasonings on the subject, as appliances which were now become obsolete and without value;

just as the cripple threw away his crutch when the Saviour commanded him to arise and walk. It would have been well if men had simply accepted what Christ and his Apostles taught, and never allowed any "thoughts to arise in their hearts." But we shall hereafter have to contemplate the disciples of Christ endeavouring to be wise beyond that which is written; and, not content with "the faith once delivered to the saints," too often preferring to follow the glimmerings of reason rather than to dwell in the light of revelation, too often permitting the truth of God to be obscured by the phantoms of their own imagination. We shall observe the treatment which the doctrine of a future life has met with in Christian ages at the hands of Christian men. At present, however, I would remind you, that it has been exposed, in ancient and modern times, to the attacks of pagan and infidel opponents; and I desire to say a few words as to the evidence by which we are assured that it is indeed, what it professes to be, a divine revelation.

The Christian doctrine of a future life rests on the authority of him who delivered it; and is, moreover, certified to us by the great fact of his resurrection, which we receive as a pledge and token that we also shall rise again;

Christ as God declared the truth, and as man exemplified it. The authority of his Godhead and the example of his manhood are both concerned ; closely united together here, as indeed they are in all parts of the gospel dispensation. Thus our assurance is two-fold ; but, on the other hand, the unbeliever also has a double object of attack. He may either endeavour to disparage the authority of Christ, or to dispute the fact of his resurrection. Should he overthrow either of these bulwarks of our faith, the other would become untenable. Accordingly he has left neither of them unassailed ; at one time he has called in question the history, at another he has impugned the authority of Christ. But he has only proved that the human reason is no more able to overthrow the gospel dispensation than to comprehend it ; for I need not say how ineffectual has been his assault. Its result has been to bring more clearly into view the eternal power and Godhead of Christ, and to establish more surely the reality of his death and resurrection. The Christian apologist has done more than defeat his adversary. He has been led to notice harmonies in the Book of Revelation, to trace connexions and nice dependencies, which but for such controversy might have escaped observation.

As an instance of this, we may now consider an objection which has been alleged, both in ancient and modern times, against the reality of Christ's resurrection.

If there ever was a narrative, the truth of which was supported by unimpeachable evidence, we should say that the account of our Lord's resurrection had this claim to our belief. Twelve persons, who had been with him from the beginning of his ministry, declared, one and all, that after his burial they saw him at divers times and places, conversed with him, handled him, ate and drank with him. They made this assertion, not once only, nor in a corner, but again and again, before large assemblies of people. They insisted upon it, as if this were the one fact of which they were called to give evidence¹. They proclaimed it to an unfriendly and suspicious audience, within fifty days after the crucifixion, at Jerusalem, on the very spot where their tale, if false, might most easily have been disproved. Yet instead of being put to silence, they convinced many thousands of their hearers; and even of the priests, the class most inclined by prejudice and by interest to oppose them, a great company

¹ Acts iv. 23: "And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

“became obedient to the faith¹.” But they did not rest here; they compassed sea and land in order to make their testimony known, they told it out among the nations, they went before princes and governors and were not ashamed. Where it was needful, as it often was, they cheerfully submitted to persecution and death, in attestation of their evidence; having left their fishing nets on the sea of Galilee, not to gain any worldly object, not in search of wealth or fame or friends, but to propagate a story which, if false, could advantage them nothing, and for which, if true, they could not hope to obtain credence by their own unassisted efforts. Yet they preached boldly, and their doctrine grew mightily and prevailed. They were confident, and they were successful. Their confidence however, and their success, must be attributed to no cunning nor eloquence of their own, for they were simple unlearned and ignorant men, but to certain miraculous endowments, especially to the gift of tongues, and the power of healing diseases, which they received at the commencement of their ministry. Hereby it was made manifest, both to themselves and their hearers, that the Lord was indeed working with them, since he con-

¹ Acts vi. 7.

firmed the word with signs following¹. They could not fail to speak boldly and effectually, while as St. Luke observes, the Lord “gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands².” If their witness were false in itself, or if the Spirit of God were not bearing witness with them, by what supposition should we either explain their conduct or account for their success?

Yet a ground for objection has been discovered in the circumstance that the witnesses were all taken from the same class; namely, from the disciples and followers of Christ. If Jesus really intended to give a proof of his divine power, he should have appeared, it is said, not to his friends, but to his enemies, to the Pharisees who persecuted him, to Pilate who condemned him, and generally, to all the people³. The infer-

¹ Mark xvi. 20. ² Acts xiv. 3; see also Heb. ii. 4.

³ These are the words of Celsus, as quoted by Origen, *Contr. Cels.* II. 63: ἐχρῆν, εἴπερ ὄντως θείαν δύναμιν ἐκφῆναι ἤθελεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἐπηρεάσασι, καὶ τῷ καταδικάσαντι, καὶ ὅλως πᾶσιν ὀφθῆναι. Origen answers that Christ, in not appearing to his enemies, shewed forbearance towards them; lest they should be struck with blindness, like the men of Sodom (Gen. xix. 11): ἐφείδετο τοῦ καταδικάσαντος, καὶ τῶν ἐπηρεασάντων ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἵνα μὴ πατάχθωσιν ἀορασίᾳ, ὅποιά οἱ ἐν Σοδόμοις ἐπατάχθησαν. St Chrysostom meets the objection by saying, that had he shewn

ence meant to be drawn from this observation is, that the witnesses, being all disciples and followers of Christ, might easily have concerted among themselves the story of his resurrection. Now we may readily acknowledge that our Lord after he had risen, did not take all those means of confounding his enemies, and displaying his triumph over the grave, which we in our wisdom might have anticipated. He shewed himself to those who already loved him and believed in him, to Mary, and Peter, and John, and the eleven Apostles, and the five hundred brethren. But he was not seen in public; to the people and the rulers, who had rejected him once, he appeared no more. This however has not been left to be discovered by the enemies of the Gospel; for the Apostle Peter has himself drawn our attention to the circumstance when

himself to the multitude, they would have thought it an apparition; for even the disciples were at first incredulous—*τίνος δὲ ἕνεκεν οὐχὶ πᾶσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ἐφάνη; ὅτι φάντασμα ἂν ἔδοξεν εἶναι τοῖς πολλοῖς, οὐκ εἰδόσι τὸ ἀπόρρητον τοῦ μυστηρίου. εἰ γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ ἠπίστουν τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ ἐθρομβοῦντο καὶ ἀφ᾽ ἧς ἐδεήθησαν τῆς διὰ χειρὸς καὶ τραπέζης, τί τοὺς πολλοὺς εἰκὸς παθεῖν ἦν;* (*Homil. I. in Act. Apost. § 4*). Bishop Sherlock has discussed the objection in his “Trial of the Witnesses” (*Works*, Vol. v. Hughes, p. 199). He argues that there was no good reason *why Christ should have appeared to the Jews. To this I have endeavoured in the Lecture to add a reason why he did not.*

he says, that "God shewed him openly, not to all the people, but unto certain witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead¹." In like manner St. Paul says, "He was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people²." The Apostles therefore did not treat this circumstance as if it were a difficulty in their case. And supposing it be left unexplained, yet as an objection to the evidence, it amounts to nothing. A large number of witnesses testify to an extraordinary fact. Their evidence, being in itself, as we have seen, unimpeachable, is in no wise invalidated by the observation, that the rest of the world had no opportunity of seeing the fact, and did not see it, and did not bear witness to it. If so much as one of those who had an opportunity of seeing the fact, denied or disputed it; if for instance Thomas had not at last been brought to exclaim "my Lord and my God," there might possibly have been room for doubt. As it is there is none. Christ shewed himself to whom he would: and if he did not choose that the evidence should be so multifarious or so overwhelming as it might have been, we can at

¹ Acts x. 40, 41.

² Acts xiii. 31.

least say that herein he was¹ proceeding consistently with the general character of his Revelation, the proofs of which are sufficient for an impartial, though not for a reluctant hearer. I say this on the supposition that we are unable to account for the manner in which the witnesses to the resurrection were selected. But what if we can see an explanation? What if it shall appear, that the exclusion of the Jewish people from the privilege of beholding the resurrection was a thing actually foreseen, and intimated, and accounted for by our Lord before his death? In that case the objection is not merely set aside; it is made to issue in a further corroboration of the Christian evidences.

Now it seems probable that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus affords in its concluding words an intimation on this subject. In the consideration of that parable it is especially needful to take care, that while we attend to the instruction which it conveys incidentally, we do not overlook its general aim and purport. Undoubtedly it holds out a warning to those who are full of this world's goods, and an encouragement to such as, being destitute of earthly blessings, are at the same time truly humble and poor in spirit. It tells

¹ See Butler's *Analogy*, part II. chap. VI.

us of another world in which the inequalities of this will be disregarded, or in some cases reversed. But it has been rightly pointed out by the expounders of the parable, that its chief point does not lie in those more obvious lessons, which are thrown out by the way, but in the warning against unbelief, which is strongly expressed in the concluding sentence. The rich man finds that he cannot extricate himself from his state of torment. There is a gulph fixed which he cannot pass, and which separates him from the world of happy spirits. His own condition being so hopeless, he is desirous at least of saving his brethren, who are still alive, from coming into the same condemnation. He is therefore represented as expressing a wish, that Lazarus should be sent to his brethren, to testify unto them. He imagines that a voice from the dead will not fail to arouse them. But he receives a final answer from Abraham in the words of my text, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

These words, as we must all allow, convey a strong practical warning to every individual Christian at the present day. But we cannot read for a moment the history of our Lord, without perceiving that they apply in the first

instance, and in a peculiar manner, to those whom he immediately addressed, namely, to the Jewish people and their rulers. For who was Jesus; what especial claim had he to be received by the Jews; and how was he treated by them? He was no other than the Messiah that was to come, the promised law-giver and deliverer, of whom Moses and the prophets had testified. The Law of Moses contained the shadow of those good things, of which the substance was revealed in Christ. In him all prophecy met and was fulfilled. In his miraculous birth, in his meek and faultless life, in his spiritual doctrine, in his miracles full of almighty power and love, he accomplished one after another the various predictions which pointed to the Messiah. Before he had fully entered on his ministry, before he had wrought a single miracle, one of his earliest disciples perceived that he it was, "of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write¹." And yet the mass of his countrymen would never to the last acknowledge this truth; and those who professed to know most about the law and the prophets, those who took upon them to guide and instruct the people, the rulers and scribes and Pharisees, they were the most

¹ John i. 45.

obstinate in denying his claims. They accused him of blasphemy; he was despised and rejected by them; just before he spake this parable, we are told, they had been deriding him¹. They ought long ago to have recognised in him the divine lawgiver of whom Moses was the type; they should have understood, that to him "give all the prophets witness." But "though they had eyes, they saw not; ears had they, and yet they heard not." The more he revealed himself to them, the more they hardened their hearts against him. Even when a Lazarus was actually raised to them from the dead, they only became more obstinate, and sought to destroy both Lazarus² and Jesus who restored him. After all this, we can readily believe, that even if Christ had appeared to them himself after his resurrection, they would not have been persuaded. They would have set at nought that miracle also; or if they had been confounded by it for a while, they would afterwards have returned to their unbelief, just as the heart of Pharaoh was hardened again and again after each of the miracles of Moses. Their incredulity would have been the same, but their guilt would have been greater. For our Lord had already declared to them, "If I had not

¹ Luke xvi. 14.² John xii. 10.

come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin¹." If then he had come to them again, in his risen and glorified body, and been again rejected, these words of his would have applied to them still more strongly. Their guilt would have been more enormous, more terrible their condemnation. Before his death, they would not acknowledge him, they hid as it were their faces from him. And when, after his resurrection, he hid his face, and would not be seen by them, surely this concealment of himself was not without a reason; surely it was intended in mercy, not in anger; and surely it was already contemplated by him, and present to his mind, when he declared in the words of the text, that "if they heard not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

On the other hand, to those who had already listened to the voice of Moses and the prophets, to such persons he appeared after he had risen from the dead. A remarkable instance of this is recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke². On the day of his resurrection he walked and conversed with two disciples, who knew not the Scriptures, and whose eyes

¹ John xv. 22.

² Luke xxiv. 23.

therefore were holden, that they should not know him. They had hoped that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; but their expectations had been defeated by his death, and do not seem to have been revived, even when they heard the report of his body having disappeared from the sepulchre, and of a vision of angels having been seen by certain women of their company. He therefore upbraided them as fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken. And then, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And when in this way he had reasoned with them, and removed their ignorance, and made some impression on them, so that they desired to hear yet more from him, and constrained him to abide with them, then it came to pass, that, as he brake bread, their eyes were opened, and they knew him. They had hearkened to Moses and the prophets; they were therefore in a fit state to look upon him who had risen from the dead. Their faith was strengthened by beholding that miracle, which would only have been a fresh stumbling-block to unbelievers. They had *heard* Moses and the prophets; and so they were persuaded when one rose from the dead.

It thus appears probable, that the concluding words of the parable have an especial application to the audience, to which they were immediately addressed, namely, to the unbelieving Jews. And it is not too much to affirm that our Lord was already looking forward, beyond the time of his resurrection, and contemplating what was to take place after that event. Certainly at the time none of his hearers would put this construction upon his words: it was only the result which could shew that there was in them any thing of a prophetic nature. But this token of his divine foreknowledge he left as it were by the way, that we who come after might see it and believe. Indeed, it was his practice to drop such unsuspected prophecies. In this way he declared long before there was to human eye any prospect of his crucifixion, that "Who-soever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me¹." No one at the time could tell how much meaning there was in that phrase "let him take up his cross, and follow me." Again, when the Jews asked him for a sign, and he answered and said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up²," the people understood his words to be a blasphemous threat

¹ Mark viii. 34.² John ii. 18.

against the holy place ; and it was not till he had risen again that even his disciples perceived his meaning, how he had spoken of “the temple of his body,” that shrine in which “dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” In this way he was continually using expressions, the full significance of which could not be understood at the moment. Having the whole range of time before his mind, dwelling in the future no less than in the present, he suffered prophecy to escape from him, just as he sometimes permitted his miraculous power of healing¹ to go forth, without notice, without a sign, while he was apparently busied about other things. To us it must be interesting and profitable to mark every occasion on which his divine nature reveals itself for a moment through the veil of his humanity, to observe him contemplating the future secretly as it were, and in soliloquy ; as in this passage we find him meditating beforehand the reason, why he could not shew himself to the Jews after his resurrection. Surely our faith in him must be confirmed by such an instance of his omniscience, which is so casual as almost to escape observation, and yet so striking when our attention is drawn to it. And we cannot but wonder at

¹ Mark v. 30, &c.

the merciful consideration, which he shewed in this respect to his enemies and persecutors. Before his death they rejected all the proofs which he offered them of his divine mission and character. Moses and the prophets they refused to hear. And therefore after he was risen he did not appear to them. He forbore to increase their guilt by exhibiting to them another kind of proof, which they would likewise have rejected. The same reason which in Galilee prevented him from doing many mighty works¹, restrained him at Jerusalem from shewing forth the mightiest work of all. That reason was no backwardness on his part, no want of power, no weariness, no fear for himself; it was the unbelief of men, the hardness of their hearts.

In this view of the subject, therefore, the circumstance that Christ did not appear to his enemies after his resurrection, affords us an additional indication of his divine foreknowledge and of his divine mercy; and so far from being an objection to the truth of the history, it only discovers to us the profound harmony and undesigned consistency of the Gospel narrative.

But while we accept this explanation, and use it as a good defence against the objection

¹ Matt. xiii. 54.

of the infidel, let us remember that this by no means interferes with the application of the text, by way of admonition and warning, to ourselves. If the parable has a special reference to the men of that day, it is addressed through them to all ages and generations. It declares that God has given to men certain means of grace; and that if we do not profit by these, if we shut our eyes to them, we have no reason to expect that any extraordinary way of salvation, any particular call, will be vouchsafed to us; for if it were, the probability is, we should not avail ourselves of it, and we should only increase our condemnation. The Jews had Moses and the prophets, whose testimony, taken in conjunction with what they saw of Jesus, was sufficient to have convinced them that he was the Christ. But as they rejected this, the additional proof, which might have been given them in the Resurrection, was withheld. We have at least as much evidence as was vouchsafed to the Jews. We know how the life and doctrine of our Redeemer fulfilled the predictions of Moses and the prophets. And furthermore, Christ has been revealed to us, as the Saviour that was crucified, yea rather, that is risen again, and is now at the right hand of God. To us also has been made known the teach-

ing of his inspired Apostles, who expounded his doctrine, and enlarged on the mysteries of Redemption. These things are set before us in the pages of Holy Writ, and in the ordinances of the Church. Such means of grace we enjoy, far more ample than those which were possessed by the Jewish people. And if we do not avail ourselves of these, we have no reason to expect any others, no ground to suppose that God will step out of the ordinary course to constrain us, either by sending to us an apparition¹ from the world of spirits, or in any other way. If he did, such an interposition would probably harden us in our disobedience. It is not further knowledge nor fresh evidence which we require, but a new heart, a right spirit, a willing mind.

If there are any among us who complain that the Revelation of a future world is not sufficiently full and definite to satisfy them; if they wait to be informed into what condition the soul will pass when it quits the body; in what manner, with what capacities and faculties the two elements of our nature will be re-united; what the future rewards and punishments will be; if there are persons who

¹ This application of the parable is well developed by Bishop Sherlock in his Discourse on Luke xvi. 31. (Vol. II. 168. Hughes.)

imagine they are prevented from embracing the Gospel cordially, by their doubts and perplexities upon such points as these; let them learn from the words of the text, that no additional information, not even a complete representation of the other world in all its details, would make them one whit more disposed to put faith in Christ and to obey his commandments. Or if there is any one who thinks that a single proof addressed personally to himself, would be of more avail to convince him, than the whole mass of evidence which is open to mankind in general, let him be assured that any impression which might at first be produced upon him by such extraordinary means, would speedily be obliterated. The emotions of awe and terror, however strongly they may possess the soul for a time, are apt to subside rapidly, when the occasion of them is removed. They even give rise, not unfrequently, to feelings of a contrary nature. As if to avenge ourselves on those things which have at any time excited our fears, we are much disposed to make light of them and turn them to ridicule. Our own observation and experience must tell us, that even where some great event or striking dispensation of God's providence befalls a sinner, it seldom happens that

he is permanently reclaimed and brought back to God. He has been frightened perhaps, but not persuaded. A temporary improvement may and frequently does take place. The house may be swept and garnished for a while, but presently the old habits resume their power, the man falls back by degrees into his former evil courses, and his last state is worse than his first: God's mercy or God's wrath has been shewn forth upon him, but he is only rendered presumptuous by the one, only made desperate by the other.

We do not say there are absolutely no instances where some signal judgment of God has produced a happy and lasting change; for the conversion of the Apostle Paul is such a case. Though he had been instructed carefully in the writings of Moses and the prophets, he had studied the Scriptures to little purpose. His "much learning" did not restrain him from being "exceedingly mad¹" against the saints, persecuting them even unto strange cities; an example to shew us that even in sacred things there is a wisdom and a zeal which is not of God. There is a saving knowledge, and there is a knowledge that only puffeth up. To him however it was permitted to behold the risen and glorified Saviour, to look on Jesus whom he had

¹ Acts xxvi. 11.

persecuted. He saw, and was converted, and never relapsed into his former unbelief. And undoubtedly we may here and there see an instance where the sinner's reformation has taken its origin from some striking manifestation of God's providence.

But such cases are extremely rare. God does not generally deal with us in any sudden and irresistible manner. He leaves us to the ordinary means of grace, which are sufficient to lead, but not such as to constrain. How unceasingly he invites us to put our trust in him, and to love him! With what holy influences, with what gentle inducements to good, does he encompass us! The ordinances of the sanctuary, the daily circumstances of our lives, the events which happen on all sides of us, are ever convincing us of our own frailty, and of our dependence on him; teaching us that this world can never fill the void in our hearts, reminding us that another state of existence awaits us, which is not far off, but even now at our feet. But if none of these things are of any effect to turn our hearts to him, if the daily chances and changes of the world convey to us no salutary warning, if in our walk through life we do not hear the voice of God continually exhorting us and pleading with us, if the ordinances of his Church have lost their

savour, and the admonitions of his ministers have become in our ears as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; if we have thus closed our eyes to the noonday sun, which is shining steadily on us, we must not expect that a light surpassing the brightness of the sun, extraordinary and irresistible, will burst from heaven and force a passage to our hearts. If we wait till God shall in this way come to seek us, we shall wait long and in vain. We must arise and seek him now, where he may be found: we must hear the still small voice in which he is speaking to us day by day; we must discern the presence of his fatherly hand, guiding us at every step and turn of our lives. If we only open our hearts to him, and give heed to his gentle admonitions, we shall no longer expect a sign from heaven, no longer desire that some special call, some irresistible evidence, should be addressed to us. If we do his will, we “shall know of the doctrine, that it is of God¹.” We shall have that proof which is most convincing, and most comforting to our souls; for we shall be unceasingly guided by his Holy Spirit, and the continual dew of his blessing will be upon us.

We have been led into these reflections, while noticing an attack directed both in

¹ John vii. 17.

ancient and modern times against the Gospel narrative of the Resurrection. I need not say how important it is that no doubt should be suffered to rest upon that great event in our Lord's history; for upon that we build the hope of our own future life and happiness. "If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain¹." The particular objection which we have been considering, is found to be altogether without weight; and we may hope that it has even put us upon observing a fresh proof of the divine foreknowledge of Christ, and of his forbearance towards the unbelieving Jews. But the course of our meditations has led us on to the conclusion, that not all the arguments that ever have been or can be adduced, will have their due effect upon us, so long as there is within us an evil spirit of unbelief, a disinclination to receive and obey the commandments of God. It is a mockery to draw near to him with the reason, while the heart is far from him. We must first dispose ourselves earnestly to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and then, and not otherwise, we shall obtain light and knowledge and understanding; yea, and all things shall be added unto us.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 14.

LECTURE VII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY; THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

COLOSSIANS II. 8.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

I OBSERVED in my last Lecture, that our assurance of the Resurrection to eternal life, is founded on one great event, namely the Resurrection of our blessed Lord; “if Christ is not risen,” says St. Paul, “then is your faith vain.” And the certainty of that event is attested by such proofs as it is impossible to gainsay; the evidence being not merely that of human witnesses, but the highest human testimony combined with the clearest tokens of the divine sanction. For not only did the twelve Apostles, ordained for that purpose, give their evidence with great power and boldness of speech, but God also bore them witness, as St. Paul reminded his disciples¹, “with signs and wonders, and with

¹ Heb. ii. 4.

divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will." An attempt to cavil at such evidence is likely to result, and as we endeavoured in one instance to shew, does result, in establishing it still more completely. But while engaged on this part of the subject, we met with a warning, delivered by our Lord himself, which assures us that no amount of testimony, not even a miraculous interference with the laws of nature, will carry conviction to the human mind, where the will and the passions are strongly set against its reception.

We have now to notice some of the questions to which the doctrine of a future life has given rise in Christian times ; questions which have sometimes been raised by that obstinate spirit of incredulity to which I have just alluded, but which sometimes also have been suggested by a less dangerous if not always a pardonable motive, namely by curiosity, by the longing desire to pry into those things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." We cannot but regret that such questions should have been set on foot, seeing they have tended, as the Apostle says, to "overthrow the faith of some¹," and to offend many of Christ's little ones. But we have our

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

Lord's word for it, that offences must needs come¹; and St. Paul even shews us one good end which they answer, when he says, "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you²." And to this we may add, that by means of such heresies and contentions, the truth itself has come to be better ascertained and made manifest. Had it not been for some doubts prevailing in the Corinthian Church respecting the Resurrection of the dead, the first Epistle to the Corinthians would not have contained its great exposition of that doctrine. There is reason to think that the controversies of later ages have produced benefits of the same kind, though in a less degree. We may hope, therefore, that some useful instruction will be gained from a review of those questions concerning a future life, to which, in these latter times, unbelief or curiosity may have given rise. And at any rate, when we call to mind the dangers and corruptions to which the doctrine of Christ has been exposed, we shall prize more highly that pure and simple form in which it has been transmitted to ourselves.

Going back therefore to the time of the Apostles, we find that even in that age there

¹ Matt. xviii. 7.

² 1 Cor. xi. 19.

were persons, who not being able to withstand the evidence of Christianity, nor disposed to reject the Christian dispensation as a whole, yet indulged themselves in raising objections against one or other of its more prominent features. Thus there were some, professing to be disciples, who took exception against the doctrine of a general Resurrection. We remember the warning which St. Paul gave to the Ephesian Church, and which he lived to see fulfilled, that from among their own selves, out of their own community, men would arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them¹. Such men were Hymenæus and Philetus, against whom the Apostle afterwards cautioned the youthful Bishop of Ephesus, and declared that they “concerning the truth had erred, saying that the Resurrection is past already;” and he adds, that they “overthrew the faith of some².” It seems to have been the intention of those heretics, to represent the word *Resurrection* (Anastasis), as a figurative expression, applying to that renovation of heart and mind which is experienced by the true disciple of Christ. The extinction of sin and ignorance, the bringing in of knowledge and the fear of God, this, they contended,

¹ Acts xx. 30.

² 2 Tim. ii. 17.

was the only Resurrection contemplated by the Gospel, or effected by the Christian Dispensation; a change in the soul, already accomplished here, not a change in the body, to be effected hereafter. Notwithstanding the rebuke of St. Paul, this notion gained ground among the disciples in Asia; it is attributed by ancient writers to some of the Gnostic sects¹, and it may be traced in some of the extravagances of later times.

Now it cannot be denied that there are many passages of Scripture in which the ideas of death and restoration from death are used figuratively. The Apostle himself affords us an example, when in speaking of baptism he says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life²." And in addressing the Ephesian Church (in which afterwards arose the error of which we speak), he says, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins³." And again, alluding to a passage of the prophet Isaiah, he says,

¹ Tertull. *De Resurr. Carnis*, XIX. Resurrectionem eam vindicandam putant, quâ quis, aditâ veritate, redanimatus et revivificatus Deo, ignorantiae morte discussâ, velut de sepulcro veteris hominis eruperit.

² Rom. vi. 4.

³ Ephes. ii. 1.

“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light¹.” And he had a precedent for such language, not only in the books of the prophets, but in the words of our Lord, who says, “He that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life².” And the Evangelist St. John, who records that expression, has also imitated it when he says, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren³.” But when our Lord used that expression, he immediately excluded any erroneous views which might be founded upon it by adding that sentence of his: “The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” It is impossible to understand this prediction in any but a literal sense; how could a bodily Resurrection be more plainly expressed, than by saying, that all who are in their graves shall come forth? And we should suppose no one could possibly rise from the perusal of that fifteenth chapter of St. Paul to the

¹ Ephes. v. 14.² John v. 24.³ 1 John iii. 14.

Corinthians with the belief, that the expressions which the Apostle there uses have reference only to a moral renovation, a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, to be accomplished in this life. Certainly if there was one thing which that apostle believed to be a reality, it was the Resurrection of the Body; and the figurative manner in which he so often alludes to that doctrine, only shews how continually the thought of it was present to his mind.

But again, there were other objectors, whose prejudice against the doctrine of the Resurrection was expressed in a different form. Their minds were possessed with the dogmas of the oriental philosophy; they regarded it as a fundamental principle that all matter is essentially evil, corruptible, and perishable, being the creation not of the Supreme God, who made the human soul, but of an inferior and malignant being; they thought that while the soul is in the body, it is held in a sort of slavery and thralldom; and they would not believe, that having once escaped from that subjection, and returned to God who made it, to dwell with him for evermore, it would be again united to a material body, and made to bear the badge of its former servitude. Such is said to have been the opinion of

the Gnostics and Manicheans, in the second, third, and fourth centuries¹. Now it is impossible to assent to this large and sweeping proposition that all matter is essentially evil, in the face of the passage of holy Scripture which tells us, that when God looked upon the works of his creation, and saw every thing that he had made, it was all very good². With regard however to the particular question of the Resurrection of the body, we may admit so much as this, for this St. Paul has declared, that “flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption³.” Such tabernacles of flesh and blood as we now inhabit, are in their nature corruptible, and are not capable of succeeding to the heavenly places. And if upon this the sceptic asks, “How then are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” we may answer, in the words of the same Apostle, that “this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality; and we shall be”—not like what we now are but—“changed.” That which is corruptible in our nature, that which is mortal, will be

¹ See Iren. v. 2. Tertull. *de Res.* 2. Augustin. *de Her.* 46. Hagenbach, *Hist. Doctr.* i. p. 211.

² Gen. i. 31.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 50.

purged away, will give place to something incorruptible and immortal. The image of the heavenly will supersede the image of the earthy. As the grain of corn first perishes, and then is transformed into something unlike itself, into a green and living plant, so it will happen to our natural bodies, after they have seen corruption, to be raised up and transformed into spiritual bodies. Thus much the Apostle has told us; and this is a sufficient answer to all objections founded on the supposition that the same perishable forms of matter in which we are now clothed, will hereafter be restored to us. For that supposition is declared to be incorrect. Further than this we are not at present permitted to know, but are left to repose on our faith in God's promises, and our knowledge of his power and wisdom. "It doth not yet appear," saith St. John, "what we shall be;" and when the Apostle proceeds to say that "when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him¹;" and when St. Paul tells us, that Christ "will change our vile body, so that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body²;" such expressions as these may well excite in us a joyful anticipation of the future life; but they do not help to make our conception of it

¹ 1 Joh. iii. 2.² Phil. iii. 21.

at all more definite. We cannot tell what is that glorious body of Christ in which he will come at the last day. For aught we know, it may be very different from that body in which he appeared after he had risen from the dead. That body in which he shewed himself to his disciples for forty days, and ate and drank with them, may have been still a body in which, out of compassion to human infirmities, his glory was veiled, his majesty was kept secret; and it may have undergone a great change, before he sat down with it at the right hand of God¹. So, though we know "we shall be like him," "it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

With regard to the bodies of the wicked, we have still less information. We know indeed that *all* who are in their graves will come forth; that there will be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. But we have no reason to think that the Apostle was contemplating the case of the wicked, when he spoke of the body as being sown in dishonour, but raised in glory. If in this life we bear no "marks of the Lord Jesus²," we cannot expect that in the next our body will be

¹ Augustin. *Epist.* XLVI.; Decret. 2^{ndi} Concil. Nic. Broughton, *On Futurity*, p. 217.

² Gal. vi. 17.

“fashioned like unto his glorious body.” But in what manner the state of the body will be made to correspond with the lost and ruined condition of the soul, we have no means of forming a conjecture.

Upon this foundation then the subject has been placed by our blessed Lord; the theories and conjectures of men remaining for the most part unanswered, and so much only being revealed, as may excite in us a lively hope and joyful expectation of the future. To help if possible the unbelief of the sceptic, and to supply food for meditation to the true believer, Christian apologists have sometimes ventured on speculations of their own. They have laboured with pious zeal to prove that the resurrection of the body was antecedently probable. Thus it is maintained by one ancient writer, that the body and soul having each their peculiar province of action, and often acting separately, each was responsible, and each ought to be judged and rewarded; that in short, they are partners here in the work, and ought to be partakers hereafter in the recompense¹. “To what purpose,” says Calvin, “do we bring our bodily members into subjection to the will of God, if they are to have no reward²?” In reply to these observa-

¹ Athenagoras, *de Res. Mort.* xviii.

² iii. 25, 28.

tions, however, it might be said, that the body is not to be regarded as the partner, but rather as the agent or instrument of the soul, and that the responsibility of using it well or ill, and therefore the reward or punishment, need not extend to it, according to human principles of reasoning, but might be confined to the soul. Again, the argument which is furnished by what is called the analogy of nature has been a favourite theme with the Christian philosopher. It was urged by Tertullian and other ancient writers, and has been adopted by one of our greatest divines, in whose words it may best be represented. "The day," he says "dies into a night, and is buried in silence and in darkness; in the next morning it appeareth again and reviveth, opening the grave of darkness, rising from the dead of night; this is a diurnal resurrection. As the day dies into night, so doth the summer into winter; the sap is said to descend into the root, and there it lies buried in the ground; the earth is covered with snow, or crusted with frost, and becomes a general sepulchre; when the spring appeareth all begin to rise, the plants and flowers peep out of their graves, revive and grow and flourish; this is the annual resurrection. The corn by which we live, and for want of which we perish with

famine, is notwithstanding cast upon the earth, and buried in the ground, with a design that it may corrupt, and being corrupted may revive and multiply; our bodies are fed with this constant experiment, and we continue this present life by a succession of resurrections. Thus all things are repaired by corrupting, are preserved by perishing, and revive by dying; and can we think that man, the Lord of all these things, which thus die and revive for him, should be detained in death so as never to live again? Is it imaginable that God should thus restore all things to man, and not restore man to himself¹?" This argument is indeed agreeable to the natural yearnings of men, and in conformity with the hope and belief of the Christian; but if it be dispassionately considered, it may perhaps be thought to belong rather to the poet than to the philosopher, being founded on a fanciful analogy, and not on any actual resemblance in the things themselves. And if it had any force, it would only lead to the presumption, that as there is a continual succession of day and night, and an annual reproduction of plants from their seeds, so there will be a periodical dissolution and reparation of the human body in its present

¹ Pearson, *On the Creed*, Art. xi. p. 376.

form; and not of the human body alone, but of all organic bodies without exception. And thus it would not suggest the idea, which the Gospel gives us, of a resurrection once for all, to eternal life, in a changed, glorious and spiritual body¹.

But whatever may be the value of such arguments as these, and upon different minds

¹ Before the coming of Christ, the observation had been made both by sacred and profane writers, that men do not, like plants, revive and reappear on the earth. Thus Job xiv. 7: "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." And so Moschus, *Idyl.* iii. 106:

"Αι, "Αι, τὰι μαλάχαι μὲν ἐπὶ κατὰ κᾶπον ὄλονται,
 "Η τὰ χλωρὰ σέλινα, τό τ' ἐνθαλὲς οὔλον ἄνηθον,
 "Υστερον αὖ ζῶντι, καὶ εἰς ἔτος ἄλλο φύονται.
 "Αμμες δ', οἱ μεγάλοι καὶ κάρτεροι ἢ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες,
 'Οππότε πρᾶτα θάνωμες, ἀνάκοι ἐν χθονὶ κοίλα
 "Ενδομες εὖ μάλα μακρὸν ἀτέρμονα νήγρετον ὕπνον.

The garden-mallow and the parsley green,
 And flowery crisp-leaved anise, though they die,
 Shall live again, and bud another year;
 But man, alas! great, cunning, powerful man,
 Once dying, sleeps forgotten in the earth,
 One long, unbroken, never-ending sleep.

The Gospel does not meet this observation by saying, that

they may possibly bear with different degrees of force, it must be recollected, that they are altogether of human origin; and whether they stand or fall, the Scripture doctrine of the Resurrection will remain unmoved, for it is founded on proofs of another kind. Is that doctrine proved to be the will of God? If it be, as it undoubtedly is, then it is immaterial whether it could have been discovered, proved, or rendered probable, by the unassisted efforts of the human reason.

Leaving these speculations, the object of which was to supply arguments in favour of the Resurrection, we have to notice others, which related to its circumstances and details. Many indeed are the questions, which a natural curiosity may suggest, as to the mode in which the body will be raised, and as to its subsequent uses and capacities. But if in

there *is* an analogy in this respect between men and plants, but by shewing that there is in store for the human body a restoration very different from the revival of a plant, and far more glorious. When St. Paul illustrates the resurrection of the body by the instance of a grain of corn which perishes and then is quickened, he does not mean to establish a general analogy between the resurrection of the body and the propagation of plants from their seeds; the similitude to which he directs our attention is only a partial one; he shews us a thing in nature, a seed of corn, which first undergoes corruption in the earth, and then is raised in a new and more beautiful form; and he says this shall be the case with the human body.

endeavouring to gratify that curiosity, we are carried away from the plain word of Scripture, we enter upon a field of conjectures in which every step is liable to error, and can hardly be free from presumption.

Thus when St. Augustine laid it down that every person, whether dying advanced in years, or in infancy, should rise again with the stature and form of early manhood, the new body so exactly corresponding with the old, that the number of the hairs of the head shall be the same in eternity as it is in time, for he drew this meaning from the declarations of our Lord, that the hairs of our heads are all numbered, and that not a hair of our heads shall perish¹; when he asserted that the personal deformities of the wicked will cleave to them, but that the saints will be free from their present imperfections; when he endeavoured to decide how the reconstruction of the body will be effected, in certain supposed cases of difficulty, as for instance, where the same particles of matter have entered successively into two or more different bodies²; and when St. Jerome treated

¹ Matth. x. 30. Luke xxi. 18.

² Dr. South, who notices this difficulty, characteristically observes, that it may be expressed in the words of the Sadducees in Matt. xxii. 28, concerning the woman who had been married to several husbands successively; "To which of them

of the uses, to which the several members of the body will be turned ; these great divines were endeavouring to settle questions which Scripture has not settled, and with regard to which the decisions of any human authority, however high, were not likely to be conclusive¹. But when such an example had been set, it is not surprising that Thomas Aquinas, and others of the scholastic divines, who were most intent upon those points of theology, which were most recondite, should have discussed these questions minutely, and with various differences of opinion. These discussions have indeed at no time very greatly disturbed the peace of the Church. By our own divines they have been wisely avoided, being considered to belong to that class of subjects, of which the Apostle says, that they “minister questions, rather than godly edifying² which is in faith².” In other countries, however, they have had a more abiding influence ; for though the controversies may have worn out and been forgotten, yet some of the opinions which were maintained in shall she belong at the last day ? for all of them had her.” (*Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 461.) Perhaps too, the answer of our Lord in that case may apply, *mutatis mutandis*, in this.

¹ Augustin. *de Civ. Dei*. xxii. 14—20 ; *Enchirid.* 87—92. Hieron. *adv Joan. Hier. et Epist.* 86. *ad Eustoch.*

² 1 Tim. i. 4.

the course of them, have been admitted, as authoritative conclusions, into the text-books and Catechisms¹ of the Roman Catholic Church. And though the subtleties and refinements of the schoolmen on this subject may not be of any momentous consequence, and may have no injurious effect upon the faith of those who receive them, we have good reason to be thankful that they have not been received among ourselves.

We have thus seen how the doctrine of the Resurrection of the body, which was first promulgated by the gospel, became in succeeding ages an object of attack and defence, and a fruitful topic of conjecture; and though the arguments by which it was upheld were not always wisely chosen, and the speculations to which it gave rise were not as discreet as they were well intentioned, yet it occasioned no deep nor extensive heresy in the Church of Christ, and it has been transmitted to us without addition or diminution, in the state in which it was originally delivered. The other subject of which I now purpose to treat, is the immortality of the soul. This, though never fully brought to light till Christ came, was not proclaimed by him as a new doctrine. We have seen on

¹ Dens, *Theolog.* Vol. VII. 325. *Catech. Trident.* § 188.

former occasions that it was the general persuasion of mankind, and that it had been the subject of much unsatisfactory discussion among philosophers. We might have supposed that the wise men of the earth, having so long been tossed about in uncertainty, and being now at their wits' end, would gladly have allowed themselves to be brought into the haven where they desired to be, and that they would have been among the first to "praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men." But those things which at the first were revealed unto babes, remained for a long time hid from the wise and prudent. The disciples of the school of Plato did not readily forsake their own theories and conjectures for the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles. And when some of them at length became converts to the Gospel, they not unfrequently retained a partiality for their old opinions, and endeavoured to reconcile and combine them with the faith which they had newly embraced. The pagan philosophy was, in their view, the wild olive on whose stock the doctrine of Christ was to be engrafted. But when they sought to accomplish this union, they made it manifest, that the Gospel had no affinity with their theories. It lends

them no countenance, much less does it lean on them for support: some of them it overthrows; of the rest it takes no heed.

The earliest Christian writer who enters into philosophical discussions on the nature and immortality of the soul, appears to be Justin Martyr, who was a convert from Platonism in the middle of the second century¹. It would be a fruitless task to review the various theories on this subject which, in the first ages of Christianity, were constructed out of the philosophy of Plato. It may suffice to mention, by way of example, one or two of the questions which were discussed. The soul being immortal, it was asked, Does its immortality extend backward into the past, as well as forwards into the future? Has it always existed, before it was in the body? Does it exist like God himself from everlasting to everlasting? This question was answered in the affirmative, by those who, like the Marcionites and Manicheans², held the doctrine of the Platonic philosophy, and considered the human soul to be of the very substance of God.

The great Christian writer Origen, in the

¹ The opinions noticed in this and the following paragraph are illustrated in the Note at the end of the Lecture.

² See Waterland, Vol. III. p. 115.

third century, does not appear to have maintained the *eternal* pre-existence of the soul; in his opinion it was originally created by God, and endued with an immortal nature; but he adopted another Platonic conceit, and thought it had lived in a former state of being, to which this life bears the relation of a state of retribution; though he did not pretend to rest his opinion upon any higher ground than conjecture, but admitted that the pre-existence of the human soul was not expressly declared in holy Scripture. Another question was, whether the principle of immortality is inherent in the nature of the soul, or imparted to it by the grace of God. Supposing immortality to be inherent in its nature, and such was the opinion of some philosophers, what is that nature? Some maintained that every soul was an emanation from, or a particle of the divine essence, and so partaking in the divine attributes. But upon this supposition it was impossible to account for the soul's becoming liable to sin and its fearful consequences. Others again, as for instance Justin Martyr, asserted that every human soul is freshly created by God, and is endowed by him with the gift of immortality. But to this hypothesis there lay an objection, which was pointed out by Gregory the Great,

that the taint of original or birth-sin would not attach to that which came newly created from the hands of God. There remained the supposition that the soul of Adam only was created by God out of nothing, and that in all the subsequent generations of men, one soul is *derived* from another, as one body is engendered of another; the two elements of our nature being subject to this difference of condition, that the one must undergo a temporary decay and dissolution, while the other is preserved from all decay by the grace of God. Such was the opinion of Tertullian and St. Augustine; and this opinion, though opposed to the theories of the Platonic philosophy, appears in the end to have prevailed among those who ventured to speculate upon the subject.

Thus it was found that the Christian doctrine of a future life could not be combined with any theory respecting the immortality of the soul that had been propounded by Plato and his followers. But the subject was not yet finally set at rest. The long night of the middle ages indeed came, and suspended for a while the contentions of philosophy; and as that period passed away, a new direction was given to the human mind by the system of Aristotle. The authority of that great master

became supreme in the schools over every department of profane learning, and even threatened to trench upon sacred ground, and to dispute precedence with the Gospel itself. Every question within the ken of human knowledge had to be adjusted according to the principles of Aristotle, and from this general ordeal the doctrine of the immortality of the soul did not entirely escape. The question was asked, and not easily answered, whether that doctrine could be maintained upon the principles of Aristotle. This point appears to have been first mooted by Averroes of Spain, an Aristotelian philosopher of the thirteenth century. But when Pomponatius of Padua, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, affirmed that the immortality of the soul was a *neutrum problema*, a problem which did not admit of a solution on the principles of Aristotle, the Church took alarm at this bold proposition, and the fifth Lateran Council was held, in which all such assertions were formally condemned, and the immortality of the soul was pronounced to be a matter of faith; this decision being rested upon the words of our Lord when he said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul¹;" and again, "He that hateth

¹ Matt. x. 28.

his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal¹."

By this decree it was proclaimed, that a doctrine which had been clearly revealed in Scripture, was no longer to be treated as a subject of philosophic doubt and enquiry. And men for the most part acquiesced in this decision. Philosophy was not unwilling to retire from a region which she was unable to explore, and which was now clearly taken into the province of religion. They who drank deepest at the fountains of earthly wisdom, perceived that they must go elsewhere in quest of the living waters; that their hopes of a future life must repose not on uncertain inferences from Plato or Aristotle, but solely and entirely on the clear voice of the Gospel. And when it was confessed by Lord Bacon, that all questions respecting the nature of the soul, however far they may be pursued by reason, must ultimately be referred for decision to the authority of Revelation, he made an avowal by which the human intellect was dignified quite as much as it was humbled. But though the wise and learned in succeeding ages have not been ashamed to repeat this confession of their great master and leader, there have always been persons who

¹ John xii. 25. See Note at the end of this Lecture.

require some other proof of the future life, besides that which is afforded by the book of Revelation. They set themselves obstinately against the Gospel, and are neither willing to accept its promises, nor to be bound by its precepts, nor in any way to admit its inspiration or authority.

Such persons the Christian divine has endeavoured to persuade, or at least to divest of some of their prejudices, by an appeal to reason and argument. Thus it has been said that if a man reflects on the operations and powers of his own mind, he will be led to conclude that it is something quite distinct from the body, and that it is not, like the body, made up of a number of parts, but that it is single, not compounded, indivisible, and therefore not liable, like the body, to dissolution and decay ; that as a matter of fact it very often does not partake in the exhaustion and disease of the body, and is able to reflect, to feel pleasure and pain, without any assistance from the senses ; and hence there arises a presumption that it may survive and continue its operations, when the body shall have been dissolved by death ; moreover, it has been urged that the mind is gifted with many noble faculties, which seldom if ever have their full development in this life ; and as it

is not reasonable to suppose that God creates any thing in vain, we may look for another state in which these faculties, here pent up or untimely nipped, will attain their full perfection. And again, looking to the moral government of the universe, and observing how in this life vice often goes unpunished, and virtue misses its reward, we are led to expect another state of existence, in which the irregularities which are apparent here will be corrected, and every action will be brought into judgment.

Such arguments, as we shewed in a former Lecture¹, were employed by the heathen sage ; and they have been adopted in these latter times by the Christian divine. Without attempting to weigh each one of them separately, it may be sufficient now to observe, that they are not all of equal force ; that perhaps any one of them taken singly would be of little value ; that they are powerful only when combined ; and that even then they do not amount to a demonstration. They may rebut objections to the immortality of the soul, they may raise a presumption in its favour ; but taken by themselves, they are not sufficient to produce conviction. Yet to such arguments the Christian divine may and must sometimes

¹ Lecture III.

have recourse, when he meets with those who refuse to acknowledge the authority of the Gospel. He must leave the vantage ground which he occupies in the Book of Revelation, and go down into the field of the human reason. If he cannot persuade men to accept the verities which he offers, he must descend to calculate probabilities with them, and to dispute with them on their own principles, making himself "all things to all men, if by any means he may save some, and bring them to a knowledge of the truth¹." But with regard to all such arguments as I have now been noticing, the same remark applies, which I have already made when considering the presumptions in favour of the Resurrection of the body. Whatever may be the fate of such arguments, whether they stand or fall, even if they are one and all condemned, the judgment which is passed on them will not in the slightest degree endanger the truth of Revelation. They are, after all, only weapons forged by the hand of man. It may be, that when we come to assay them, we shall find that we cannot go with them, cannot hope to do battle with them successfully against the giants of the earth. But the Gospel is independent of them, does not use them, nor need

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 22.

them. It has a method of its own. It does not beat about for *à priori* reasoning; it does not wait upon probabilities; it announces a truth, and does so with divine authority. It stays not to silence objections, to parley with the reason. It addresses itself to the conscience, to the heart, to the faith of men. It declares the immortality of the soul, the judgment to come, the life everlasting; and in so doing it awakens a witness to itself in every breast. For, as we have shewn on a former occasion¹, there is already, prior to Revelation, independent of reason, a voice in man's heart, a divine testimony, which tells him he shall not die for ever, but live hereafter, and give an account of his actions. He who heeds not this inward monitor, but despises the promises and threatenings of the Gospel, will hardly be moved by any arguments of man's devising. But still, even such arguments are not to be wholly neglected; when other means fail, they may sometimes, by God's blessing, be made effectual; they may serve to arouse the conscience, to open some avenue to the heart which prejudice had closed, and thus may become instrumental in paving the way for the entrance of heavenly truth.

¹ Lecture II.

Upon the whole then, we may say of the soul's immortality, as we have already observed of the Resurrection of the body, that from the time when it was published by Christ and his Apostles, the doctrine has been turned about on all sides by the ingenuity, well or ill intentioned, of the human reason. The attempts to overthrow it have been feeble, the objections to it scarcely worth mention ; it has not been made the occasion of any grievous schism in the Church ; and it has come down to ourselves in its simple and original form. Whatever differences there may be among Christians upon other articles of the faith, and even upon some points relating to the future life, the great doctrines of the Resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, are held in the Church Catholic without reserve. If there is less speculation on these subjects now, than there was in former ages, we do not regard this as a sign that they occupy a smaller share of the thoughts, or exert less influence on the conduct of men. Rather we may hope that some advantage has been derived from the failures of former times, and that men have seen how presumptuous and vain a thing it is to put forth theories and conjectures upon matters so far beyond their reach. Questions there are in-

deed, connected with these doctrines, upon which we might wish to be enlightened—difficulties which we cannot entirely remove. Perhaps it is not possible altogether to shut our eyes to such questions and difficulties; it is natural that we should sometimes look wistfully at them, even as the disciples gazed steadfastly at the cloud which separated from them their ascended Lord. Yet like those disciples, we may cheerfully withdraw our eyes again, and go on our way rejoicing; for we have a light which is sufficient to guide us, and in following which we cannot err. At present our knowledge of heavenly things is imperfect; we speak, we understand, we think about them no more distinctly, no more accurately, than children do about the estate of manhood. But a little while, and that which is in part will be done away; we shall see face to face; and know even as also we are known.

NOTE ON LECTURE VII.

THE Platonic notion that the soul, being a particle of the divine mind, is naturally immortal (θεία καὶ ἀθάνατος, καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου βασιλικοῦ μέρος), and the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls (ὅτι μεταμείβουσιν εἰς ἕτερα σώματα), are opposed by Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, § 4 (pp. 105—109. Ed. Paris. 1742). He says the soul is not by nature immortal, any more than the body, but, like the rest of the universe, created (εἰ δὲ ὁ κόσμος γεννητὸς, ἀνάγκη καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς γεγενῆναι). He does not however assert that any souls perish; that would be a god-send to the wicked (Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ ἀποθνήσκειν φημι πάσας τὰς ψυχὰς ἐγώ. ἔρμαιον γὰρ ἦν ὡς ἀληθῶς τοῖς κακοῖς). But at God's pleasure the soul may cease to be; for it is not, as he is, self-existent (Ζώης δὲ ψυχὴ μετέχει, ἐπεὶ ζῆν αὐτὴν ὁ Θεὸς βούλεται. οὕτως ἄρα καὶ οὐ μετέξει ποτε, ὅταν αὐτὴν μὴ θέλοι ζῆν. οὐ γὰρ δι' αὐτῆς ἐστὶ τὸ ζῆν ὡς τοῦ Θεοῦ). In the *Fragm. de Resurr.* p. 594, he appears to proceed on the supposition that the soul is a part of the Divine essence, and as such immortal; and he argues that no thanks would be due to God for preserving that which is a part of himself, but that the Divine goodness is shewn by his loving that which is alien to his own nature, namely, our bodies. Here, however, he is arguing with the philosophers on their own principles; and he seems to adopt their hypothesis as an *argumentum ad hominem*, not because he held it himself.

Tertullian supposes that the souls of men are essen-

tially immortal, and that they are propagated *per traducem*, like their bodies. See *De Anima*, xiv—xx.

Tatian considers the soul to be in its own nature mortal, but capable of immortality: οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος καθ' ἑαυτὴν, θνητὴ δέ. ἀλλὰ δύναται ἡ αὐτὴ καὶ μὴ ἀποθνήσκειν. *Contr. Gr.* xiii.

Origen maintained the pre-existence of the soul; he resorted to that doctrine chiefly to reconcile his notion of God's justice with the apparent diversity in the characters and conditions of men. He said that in the beginning all souls were created alike; but that in a former stage of existence they gained the favour of God or incurred his displeasure—and hence the inequality in their present circumstances. In support of this opinion, he refers especially to Rom. ix. 13, 14: "Jacob have I loved," &c. See *De Princip.* i. 7. 4; ii. 9, 6 and 8. *Comm. in Matt.* xx. 6, 7; *in Joh.* ii. 25. Ed. Paris 1733. Vol. i. 72, 99, 100; iii. 703; iv. 85. The opinion that the human soul is of the divine substance, existing from all eternity, is attributed to Origen by some writers, *e. g.* by St Jerome, but does not appear to be asserted or implied in any of his extant writings; and it is at variance with several passages in which he considers the soul to have been created by God. See Huet, *Origeniana*, ii. 6.

In the fifth century, the doctrine of original sin became especially prominent, and suggested a new question concerning the origin of the soul. St. Augustine desires to find St. Jerome right in his opinion, that every soul is freshly created by God; yet is unable to see how this can be, consistently with the cardinal doctrine of the transmission of the guilt of original sin. See his Epistles to Jerome (166) and Optatus (190).

St Gregory says more fully (Epist. ix. Indict. ii. Vol. ii. Bened. 970), “De origine animæ inter sanctos patres requisitio non parva versata est; sed utrum ipsa ab Adam descenderit, an certe singulis detur, incertum remansit; eamque in hac vita insolubilem fassi sunt esse quæstionem. Gravis enim est quæstio, nec valet ab homine comprehendere: quia si de Adam substantia anima cum carne nascitur, cur non etiam cum carne moritur? si vero cum carne non nascitur, cur in ea carne quæ de Adam prolata est, obligata peccatis tenetur?”

In the thirteenth and two following centuries, the question was debated, whether the immortality of the soul is a truth capable of philosophical demonstration. Bonaventura, of the mystic school, held the affirmative; “animam esse immortalem auctoritate ostenditur et ratione” (*De Nat. D.* ii. 55); and this was the opinion of Thomas Aquinas. Duns Scotus maintained the negative “non posse demonstrari, quod anima sit immortalis” (*Comm. in Sentent. Lib. ii. Dist. 17. Qu. 1*). Pomponatius in his treatise *De Animæ Immortalitate*, shews that the doctrine cannot be proved on any hypothesis consistent with the principles of the Aristotelian philosophy, and concludes that “quæstio de immortalitate animæ est neutrum problema, sicut etiam de mundi eternitate; mihi namque videtur quod nullæ rationes naturales adduci possunt, cogentes animam esse immortalem, minusque probantes animam esse mortalem, sicut quamplures doctores tenentes eam immortalem declarant.”

The following is an extract from the Decree of the fifth Lateran Council, A. D. 1513:

“Cum itaque diebus nostris (quod dolenter referimus) zizaniæ seminator, antiquus humani generis hostis, non-

nullos perniciosissimos errores a fidelibus semper explosos in agro domini superseminare et augere sit ausus, de natura præsertim animæ rationalis; quod videlicet mortalis sit, aut unica in cunctis hominibus [so Averroes, according to Pomponatius]; et nonnulli temere philosophantes, secundum saltem philosophiam verum id esse asseverent; contra hujusmodi pestem opportuna remedia adhibere cupientes, hoc sacro approbante concilio damnamus et reprobamus omnes asserentes animam intellectivam mortalem esse, aut unicam in cunctis hominibus; et hæc in dubium vertentes; cum illa non solum vere per se et essentialiter humani corporis forma existat, sicut in canone felicitis recordationis Clementis Papæ V. prædecessoris nostris in generali Viennensi concilio edito continetur, verum et immortalis, et pro corporum quibus infunditur, multitudine singulariter multiplicabilis et multiplicata et multiplicanda sit. Quod manifeste constat ex evangelio, cum dominus ait; animam autem occidere non possunt (Matt. x.) et alibi; qui odit animam suam in hoc mundo, in vitam æternam custodit eam."

One of the Council, the Bishop of Bergamo, made a protest against this Decree, saying that theologians ought not to fetter philosophers in their speculations.

Lord Bacon says that all inquiries concerning the nature of the soul "utrum nativa sit an adventitia, separabilis an inseparabilis, mortalis an immortalis, quatenus legibus naturæ alligata, quatenus minime, et similia, licet etiam in philosophia et diligentiore et altiore inquisitionem subire possint quam adhuc habetur, utcumque tamen in fine religioni determinanda et definienda rectius transmitti censemus; aliter enim erroribus haud paucis, et sensus illusionibus omnino exponentur. Etenim cum

substantia animæ in creatione sua non fuerit extracta aut deducta ex massa cœli et terræ, sed immediate inspirata a Deo, cumque leges cœli et terræ sint propria subjecta philosophiæ ; quomodo possit cognitio de substantia animæ rationalis ex philosophia peti et haberi ? Quinimmo ab eadem inspiratione divina hauriatur, a qua substantia animæ primo emanavit.” *De Augment. Scient.* IV. 3.

LECTURE VIII.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE ; PURGATORY ; THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENTS.

2 COR. V. 8.

*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be
absent from the body, and to be present with
the Lord.*

WHEN our blessed Lord appeared upon earth, and declared the way of everlasting life, he applied a more powerful impulse than had ever been known before both to the hopes and to the curiosity of mankind. One thing at least was made certain, which had always been disputed, that there is a future state of retribution. And so much having been revealed, men were naturally eager to know more ; to enquire into all the details, to learn every particular relating to their future destiny. But it was no part of Christ's mission to enter into particulars. He opened to us the gates of heaven ; but he did not disclose to view the things which are within those blissful portals. He bade us look beyond the valley of the shadow of

death, and fear no evil. But when we consider that dark interval which separates between this life and the next, we find that it still remains for the most part impenetrable and obscure. Doubtless we have both upon this and every other subject all the information that is necessary or even expedient for us. With regard especially to the time which must elapse between our death and resurrection, we know that it is but as a moment when compared with the ages which are to succeed it; and so long as we are sure of rising again at the last day to eternal life, it is really of little consequence what becomes of us in the interval. But though that intermediate state vanishes altogether, and is of no account, when compared with the eternity which succeeds it, still it becomes of interest, when we connect it with this present life, and remember that it is the condition into which we shall pass the moment we depart hence. And if not for our own sakes, yet on account of our dear deceased relatives, we would fain have some knowledge of it, in order that we may be able to form a conception of their present employment and condition. And therefore we search the Scriptures diligently and enquire whether, though no express revelation be given on the subject, there may not

be some scattered hints, some indirect intimations. Such intimations men have found, or thought they found. And as some of the inferences which Scripture in this way affords have been adopted by our Church, while other opinions, though received elsewhere, have been rejected by ourselves as false and mischievous, it may be useful to us to venture a little way in this path of enquiry, proceeding so far as we have the guidance of the Church, and no further.

After what has been said in my former Lectures, it may now, I think, be taken for granted, that the soul is immortal, that it does not, like the body, undergo dissolution, does not perish beneath the stroke of death, but survives that awful change, and subsists, though cast out of its earthly tenement. The question then arises, what is its condition during the interval, until it is reunited to the body? Is it altogether unconscious, without perception, sleeping, to use the comparison of Bishop Bull¹, like the bats in their dark winter-quarters; or is it conscious, capable of pleasure and of pain?

For an answer to this question we shall look in vain to considerations *à priori*, or to the speculations of philosophy. For philoso-

¹ Sermon III. "On the Intermediate State."

phy can do no more than guess at the nature of the soul, and cannot tell what functions it may be able to discharge when totally independent of the body. The answer must be sought for in Scripture, and if not found there, it is nowhere given among men. And here we may observe at the outset, that even should the soul be declared insensible during the interval, that interval lasting ever so many thousands of years, this result would indeed disappoint us, inasmuch as it would seem to postpone for a long period our entrance upon a state of happiness, but in reality it need not occasion us any uneasiness ; for when the end at length arrived, we should only appear, as Luther¹ expresses it, to have slept for a moment, and our awakening to the happiness of the next world would seem to follow immediately upon our shutting our eyes to the troubles of the present.

The passages, however, which are quoted from holy Scripture, do not appear to favour this supposition. They rather lead us to the belief, that during its separation from the body the soul is in a conscious state, and receives a foretaste of its future doom.

When this subject is brought before us,

¹ Videbuntur sibi vix momentum dormivisse.—On
Eccles. ix. 10.

our thoughts naturally recur at once to the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus; we remember how the one is said to have died, and to have been carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; and the other to have died, to have been buried, and to have lift up his eyes in hell, being in torments¹.

The description of the unseen world which is contained in this parable would indeed be at once conclusive on the subject, and would leave no room for doubt, if we could suppose that it was intended as a literal representation of what has happened, or may happen, in the intermediate state. But there are many difficulties in the way of our so understanding it. If it were to be taken literally, then, inasmuch as the Rich Man expresses a wish that Lazarus might be sent to cool the tip of his tongue, we should have to suppose that the body with its aches and pains is in some manner present there; a thing which is in no way conceivable. Moreover, it would appear that the blessed do literally repose on the bosom of the faithful Abraham, that they are separated from the wicked by a great gulph, yet within sight and hearing of them, and that it is possible for the wicked to feel a benevolent concern for the friends whom they

¹ Luke xvi. 22, 23.

have left, and a desire to prevent them from coming into the same place of torment with themselves; none of which suppositions are in keeping with what we learn from other parts of Scripture. It is plain that the object of the parable was not to present us with a picture of the intermediate state, but to furnish certain lessons and warnings which might be of use to us in the present world. And several imaginary circumstances and details are introduced, to serve as the framework to which these practical admonitions should be attached. But for anything we know to the contrary, all the circumstances may be imaginary, or accommodated to the popular ideas and the popular phrases at that time prevalent among the Jews respecting the condition of departed souls. And at any rate, as we are unable to say how much in this description may be figurative, and how much literal, we cannot build on it any doctrine, nor derive any strong inference from it. At the same time, however convinced we may be that the circumstances of the parable are in the main imaginary, adapted to the weakness of our conceptions, and not to be pressed literally, we can hardly help supposing that they have some foundation in fact. It does not seem probable that such a scene would have

been presented to our minds, if there had been nothing in the invisible world to correspond with it. And the parable may therefore be cited, not indeed as affording a decisive proof, but as yielding a presumption, that the souls of good and wicked men, immediately upon leaving the body, are respectively in a state of happiness and misery.

Another passage to which reference has been made, is the promise given by our Lord to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." From this place we conclude, that our blessed Lord on the same day that he was crucified, went together with the penitent thief to a place which he called paradise; a name certainly not expressive of mere passive insensibility, but of actual happiness. In other words, our Lord upon descending into hell, that is to say, to the abode of departed souls, entered into that part of it which he called paradise, a garden of delights. And it is not unreasonable to infer, that in this, as in other respects, he underwent the common lot of humanity, and that the souls of all men will at their death descend into hell, that is, to the abode of the departed, and that the souls of his faithful people will be admitted into that blessed abode in which he for a short time rested from his labours. This,

I say, is a probable and reasonable inference. It is however only an inference; and cannot be relied on so strongly, as if the same thing had been expressly stated in holy Scripture.

Again, there are two passages in St Paul's Epistles, which appear to have the same import with the words of our Lord already quoted. In the one passage the Apostle expresses a desire to "depart and to be with Christ¹," which he says is far better than to abide in the flesh; in the other he says the same thing, when he declares himself "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord²." It was therefore his expectation, that when he departed hence, he should immediately be with Christ; that he should be no sooner absent from the body, than present with the Lord. It would seem that he anticipated for himself during the time that he was to be separated from the body, a state not of sleep and insensibility, but of joy and felicity in the presence of Christ; a state far better, as he says, than the life which now is in the flesh. When therefore, in other places³, he speaks of the dead as those who "are fallen asleep," "fallen asleep in Christ," "sleeping in Jesus," these

¹ Phil. i. 23.

² 2 Cor. v. 8.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 18; 1 Thess. iv. 13, &c.

expressions are not to be taken literally; he only uses them as the common and familiar phrases, by which it was usual to speak of the departed. And when, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment¹;" we are not to conclude that the one event will appear to follow closely upon the other, without any interval, but that after our death, the next great event, the next important change that will happen to us, will be the judgment.

These are the principal passages of holy Scripture which appear to bear upon the subject. And we may perhaps say concerning them, that taken by themselves they afford a presumption, they lead to a probable inference, but do not convey an express and positive revelation. They do not however stand alone; they must be viewed in conjunction with the opinions of the early Church, which has always a claim to be heard, both as an interpreter of Scripture, and as a witness to the faith. The most ancient fathers of the Church speak without any doubt concerning the happy estate of those who are fallen asleep in Christ. Thus the most ancient of all, one who had probably been a fellow-labourer and companion of St Paul²,

¹ Heb. ix. 27.

² Phil. iv. 3.

I mean St Clement of Rome, says, that “all the generations from Adam until this day are past and gone; but they who by the grace of Christ have finished their course in charity, now occupy the place of the godly, and shall be made manifest when Christ visits the earth in his majesty¹.” Again, he says, that St Peter “after his martyrdom went to his appointed place of glory².” And that place he regarded not as the highest and most glorious of all, for the saints³ without us will not be made perfect; they wait until God shall have accomplished the number of his elect; but he compared it to the holy place in the Jewish temple, lying next adjacent to the holy of holies. In the second century, one Christian writer (Justin Martyr⁴) expressed his belief that “the souls of the righteous remain after death in some better place, and wicked souls in an evil one, expecting the time of judgment;” and another (Irenæus⁵) says, “that every sort of men, both good and bad, receive an appropriate habi-

¹ *Ad Corinth.* i. 50.

² *Ad Corinth.* i. 5. He quotes Isai. xxvi. 19, 20; a passage which was applied by Rabbinical writers to the receptacle of souls.

³ Heb. xi. 40.

⁴ *Dial. cum Tryph.* § 4.

⁵ *Adv. Hær.* v. 31, § 2. So Origen, *Homil.* vii. in *Levit.* S. Ambros. *De Bono Mortis*, xi.

tation, even before the judgment." He speaks of the good as being in paradise, and supposes the joys of that place to be inferior to those of heaven. And Tertullian¹ describes paradise as a place of divine pleasantness, appointed to receive the spirits of the saints. There can therefore be no doubt that the interval between death and the resurrection was regarded by the early Church as a period which will be passed, not unconsciously, but in a state of expectation, and with a foretaste of the future judgment, though neither the happiness of the saints nor the misery of the wicked will have attained its final consummation. And when we consider this belief of the ancient Christians in conjunction with the passages which I have quoted from holy Scripture, we can hardly doubt that it is in accordance with the teaching of our blessed Lord and his Apostles.

And this has always been the view of our own Church. For although at the time of the Reformation, some of the great Protestant divines maintained what is called the sleep of the soul, that is, its insensibility after death², our Reformers did not accede to their

¹ *Apol.* XLVII.

² Thus Luther in his Commentary on Eccles. ix. 10, treats that passage as a testimony, "quod mortui nihil sentiunt.

opinion, but stood by the authority and example of antiquity. And accordingly, in the service for the Burial of the Dead, we express our belief, that they who have departed in the true faith, though they have not yet attained "their perfect consummation and bliss," do "live with Almighty God," and "are in a state of joy and felicity." On the other hand, as if to avoid passing a severe censure upon those who should hold a different opinion, the Church has abstained from defining the doctrine as an article of faith; one of King Edward the Sixth's articles which was opposed to the notion of the sleep of the soul, having been omitted at the revision in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Such was the moderation of our Reformers, observing their own rule, and not wishing to enforce any thing as necessary to salvation, which could not be distinctly proved from holy writ¹.

We have passed at once from the early Church to our own, and seen how the two agree together and are at one upon this

Nulla enim inquit, est ibi cogitatio, cognitio, sapientia." Calvin, on the other hand, in his tract entitled *Psychopannychy*, held the consciousness of the soul, and its capability of joy and grief. See Capellus *de Statu animæ post mortem*, who supposes that the "sleep of the soul" was held by Luther, the more completely to exclude the doctrine of purgatory.

¹ Art. xxii.

subject. Simple and without presumption was the faith of those ancient Christians, and such as theirs was, such is now our belief. But is it everywhere the same; and has it been preserved in the same simple form through all the intervening generations? We cannot forget—would it were possible at least for us, in this our day, to forget!—how wide a departure from the primitive doctrine has taken place in other times, and in other parts of the fold of Christ; how by slow degrees, in the course of ages, errors and superstitions relating to the condition of departed souls, crept over a large portion of the Church; how that middle space between death and judgment, as though it were some desert place, some spot overlooked in the divine counsels, the human fancy has seized upon, and covered with a creation of its own. Purgatory, indulgences, masses for the dead, the invocation of saints, these are names, with the full meaning of which some of us perhaps are scarcely acquainted even by hearsay; but they are the names of things by means of which the Roman Church has for ages exercised a mighty influence on the minds of individuals, and on the customs and institutions of society; being each one of them a mere human invention, or, in the language

of our Articles, “a fond thing, vainly imagined.” To enter upon all these topics would carry me far beyond my present limits; but the history of the doctrine of purgatory conveys too instructive a lesson, and is too closely connected with my subject, to be altogether omitted.

That doctrine was slow in attaining its full growth, and underwent several changes; but in the form which it finally assumed, and in which it is now taught, it asserts, that the souls of penitent sinners, immediately after death, are subjected to a fiery process of purification and punishment, the period of which is various, depending on the heinousness of each man’s sins; and that at the end of that period, even before the day of judgment, they are admitted to the joys of heaven. The souls of holy men, and of sinners dying impenitent, are not affected by purgatory, but are supposed, contrary to the teaching of Scripture and the early Church, to go at once to their final reward and punishment, without waiting for the day of resurrection and judgment. This is the doctrine, as it was fixed in the fifteenth century, by the decree of the Council of Florence. But we must go back, and mark its foundation, and trace it from its first small beginnings. And in the first place

we enquire, whether it is to be found in Scripture? Upon this point we need only repeat, what has been declared in our Articles and proved with care by the fathers of the Reformation, that the doctrine of purgatory “is grounded on no warranty of holy Scripture, but is rather repugnant to the Word of God;” the passages which have been alleged in its support being either taken from apocryphal books, or else being wholly irrelevant to the subject. In the next place, there is no evidence of the doctrine having been taught, believed, or even thought of, by those who lived next after the apostolic age, nor by the generation who succeeded them. There is no trace of it in the Church for two hundred years. A doctrine which, if true, was very important, was for two centuries not named nor in the slightest way recognised, in any part of the Church, either in the East or the West, at Antioch, at Alexandria, or at Rome¹. The result is the same whether we examine the writings of the ancient Fathers, or decypher the monuments, the epitaphs of saints and martyrs, which Rome still preserves in her catacombs², as a testimony against her-

¹ This is fully admitted by Cardinal Fisher, in his *Assertionis Lutheranae Confutatio*, xviii. (Ed. 1523.)

² See Maitland's *Church in the Catacombs*.

self. No germ of the doctrine of purgatory, no hint of it, no approach to it, can be discovered. But when did it first make its appearance, and from what quarter was it introduced? This is not the least remarkable part of the history. I have mentioned in a former lecture, the notion of certain heathen philosophers, of Plato and his disciples, that the souls of men, being polluted by their sojourn upon earth, must after death undergo a purification, before they can be admitted into the presence of the Deity, or be reunited to his substance. This notion, in one form or another, prevailed extensively in the pagan world. It was adopted in the third century by Origen¹, who lived in that city of Egypt which was the chief seat of the Platonic philosophy, being himself deeply imbued with the spirit of that philosophy. He was unable, as it seems, to rest in the belief that the punishments of hell would indeed be eternal, and he imagined that the souls of the wicked would after the day of judgment be exposed to a fire of purification, until such time as it should please God to release them, and give them an entrance to everlasting happiness. Such was the first beginning of the doctrine of purgatory; it was borrowed from a heathen

¹ See note (A) at the end of this Lecture.

source, by one who was too much addicted to that wisdom which is foolishness with God, too prone to indulge in the speculations of his own reason. Many were the conceits which Origen derived from the system of Plato; but this was the most successful of them all. After remaining for nearly two centuries without any powerful advocate, and after undergoing considerable modifications, it became the doctrine of the Western Church. Between Origen and St Augustine there was an interval of nearly two centuries; and St Augustine is the great authority to whom the Romish doctors refer in their attempts to defend the doctrine of purgatory. He maintained that this cleansing fire was to be inflicted on the sinner, not as Origen supposed, after the day of judgment, but before it, that is to say, in the interval between death and the resurrection. He several times recurred to this subject, admitted its difficulty, and continued to the last to mention it in a wavering and uncertain tone. He was not uniform in his manner of stating the doctrine, spoke of it at one time as a thing not incredible, at another as an opinion which might be true, which ought to be enquired into, and to which, if any persons chose to hold it, he could make no objection: so little

disposed was that great master of theology to commit himself unreservedly to the doctrine, or to bind it on the consciences of others. However, from his time it continued to gain ground. In the sixth century it was sanctioned, though in its least objectionable shape, by papal authority. For Gregory the Great pronounced it to be a matter of faith, and necessary to be believed; but at the same time declared that the guilt of great offences could not be removed by the fire of purgatory; he confined that cleansing process to the little sins, to the idle word, immoderate laughter, and the like, not allowing that a man could be purged hereafter even from these, unless he did his utmost to purify himself now. But the promoters of the doctrine availed themselves of his authority to blow up the flames of purgatory, without following his example in setting bounds to their operation. The benefit of purgatory was not long confined to those who had inadvertently committed little sins, and repented of them, and done their best to forsake them; it was extended even to those who had been guilty of great and heinous sins, and died without any amendment of life. In the tenth century, in the thickest darkness of the middle ages, an annual festival was added

to the calendar, and appointed to be observed for the benefit of All Souls suffering in purgatory. Lastly, the supreme authority of the Council of Florence in the fifteenth century cast the doctrine in an unalterable form, and declared that the fire of purgatory was destined for sinners dying penitent, and for them only; that reprobate sinners could not benefit by it, and the saints did not need it, and that these two classes went immediately after death to their final retribution. The Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, found the doctrine of purgatory in this form, and left it unaltered, only adding an anathema upon those who disbelieved it.

Such was the gradual progress of this doctrine. Having its foundation neither in Scripture, nor in apostolic teaching, nor in the belief of the early Church, but in heathen philosophy, it was adopted by one who endeavoured to reconcile the system of Plato with the Gospel. Next it was received and modified, and recommended as a matter of opinion, by individual bishops and doctors of the Church. Then it was sanctioned, though in a very restricted form, by papal authority. After that it took possession of a day in the calendar. Lastly, it was settled and defined by the decree of one council, and the ana-

thema of another. I need not now remind you of the great and practical influence which this doctrine in former ages exercised over the minds of men ; how slowly it spread over the Western Church ; by what superstitious tales it was enforced ; how the rich on their death-beds devoted to God their worldly substance, that so by the intercessions of the faithful their own guilty souls might obtain an earlier deliverance from the fiery furnace which awaited them ; how the coffers of the Church were replenished, and her material splendour and temporal power enhanced by these unholy gains. We know too how there came at length an awakening of men's minds as if from sleep, a bursting loose as it were from captivity. And this very doctrine it was, together with the corrupt practices attendant upon it, which first kindled the flame—we trust it may be called the truly purifying flame—of the Reformation.

Such was this system of purgatory, created by the human reason, when it became impatient of the control of Scripture, and no longer deigned to follow in the footsteps of the founders and fathers of the Church. And purgatory was but one portion of a still greater system, during the prevalence of which the highway of Gospel truth was in a great mea-

sure deserted, and the travellers walked in the by-ways of error and superstition. As to the motives which may have induced the authorities of the Church to insist upon the doctrine of purgatory, whether they were influenced by a real though mistaken love of souls, or by a desire of power and gain, or by a mixture of good and evil motives, it may well become us not to express nor even to entertain an opinion, seeing that we ourselves are corrupt and sinful men. It is our concern to avoid the faults of those who have gone before us, not to judge them. And if we have great reason to be thankful that we have been preserved from those faults, we have also much need to take heed to ourselves, lest while we pride ourselves in possessing the right way, we neglect to use it.

We may therefore attribute the origin of the doctrine of purgatory to the misuse of reason, and the licentious exercise of private judgment by individual Christians. Passing over the motives, which might induce the authorities of the Church to countenance it, we cannot overlook one consideration, which might help to make it acceptable to the people at large. I have already observed, that it appears in the first instance to have been adopted by Origen, from the wish to find an

escape from the prospect of God's eternal wrath and of everlasting punishment. And though this was not the view of those who came after him, and he was himself censured for entertaining it, and the Church always maintained eternal punishment as the doom of impenitent sinners, still the inevitable tendency of the doctrine of purgatory was to fix men's minds upon the temporary retribution, and to divert them from the eternal judgment, making them regard this as a thing more remote, not so certain, and at any rate not likely to take effect, except in some extreme cases. In this manner the threat of the everlasting burnings was made void. And when means had been devised by which the temporal fires might be commuted for acts of penance, for sums of money, or other penalties discharged in this life, men were enabled to pursue their pleasures, and continue in their sins, without much hindrance from religion, and without any strong reproof from conscience. A system of which this was the practical tendency, could not fail to have a charm for all who were worldly minded, "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

The eternal judgments of God cannot be contemplated even by the true and faithful

Christian, without a deep feeling of awe ; but he who is the servant of sin is of course unable to contemplate them at all. He shuns the thought of them : he seeks shelter from them everywhere, except in that refuge which Christ has provided against them. To such a person, as an ancient writer has observed, annihilation would be a God-send¹. But in default of that alternative, he is presumptuous enough to hope, that after an interval of suffering and punishment, after undergoing some kind of purgatory, he will be admitted to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. And this is not merely one of those broken reeds upon which profligate and abandoned sinners are supporting themselves, but it is avowed as a doctrine by some writers of the Anabaptist and Socinian² persuasions. The reasonings of these modern sectaries illustrate the manner in which the doctrine was originally arrived at in ancient times. Instead of submitting themselves to the revealed will of God, they seek to make the attributes and counsels of the Almighty conform to their own notions. It seems they cannot reconcile eternal wrath and eternal

¹ ἑρμαιον. Justin. Mart. *Dial. cum Tryph.* § 4.

² For an example of this, see Thomas Belsham's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, p. 402. (Ed. 1801.)

vengeance with their conceptions of infinite mercy and justice and power. To their view it is unjust that a finite offence (as they phrase it) should be visited with an infinite punishment, and it is not conceivable that a God of mercy and benevolence would be angry with one of his own creatures for ever; or else they say, if the justice and benevolence of God are unimpeachable, there must be a defect in his power; a being who is almighty as well as all-merciful, would not have made men liable to eternal misery. Now all such observations, however plausible they may appear to some persons, are mere guesses and presumptions, founded not on knowledge, but on ignorance of the things to which they relate. We are most imperfectly acquainted with the nature and attributes of God; we speak of his infinite justice, mercy and power; and we do well: we can form no higher conception of him than we do by the help of these expressions. But even so we form no adequate idea of him, and perhaps we no more conceive him as he is, than when we speak of his being angry, and of his repenting, of his having eyes and hands. It may be as erroneous to attribute to him the virtues of humanity, as it is to conceive him subject to the emotions, and endowed with the bodily faculties of our

nature. And as we are unable to comprehend his perfections, so neither can we survey the field, the great field of the universe, upon which they are exercised. With our limited observation, with our feeble perceptions, we cannot tell how all things may be working together for good, nor how the seeming discords of creation may be made to blend into one sublime harmony. The objections therefore to eternal punishments, of which I have spoken, are founded entirely on guesses and presumptions; and they may best be met, not by apologies and explanations of our own, which from the nature of the thing must be equally conjectural, but by a simple reference to the revealed will of God; taking our stand by the plain word of Scripture, and not departing from it to the right hand or to the left. And there the subject is shut up in very narrow compass, too narrow, as we might suppose, to leave any ground for controversy. The happiness of the blest, and the misery of the lost, are both described in the same sentence by one and the same word, *αἰώνιος*¹, everlasting. From this we must needs conclude that the suffering and the enjoyment will be

¹ Matt. xxv. 46, *κόλασιν αἰώνιον, ζωὴν αἰώνιον*. As to the use of *αἰώνιος* in the New Testament, and the history of the words *αἰών*, *αἰώνιος*, see Note (B) at the end of this Lecture.

equally enduring ; what various degrees and intensities there may be in either state we are not informed ; but it is plain there will be no passing from the one state to the other. These two alternatives are set before us, of everlasting happiness and woe ; these two and no other—no annihilation, no temporary fire of purgatory, to be followed by an entrance into eternal bliss ; these two alternatives, each beginning, as we have seen reason to believe, immediately after death, but not having its final consummation till the day of judgment. These two conditions therefore being offered to us, and each one of us being perfectly free to choose the one and reject the other, surely it becomes us to adopt the way of salvation, and to be intent upon securing it, and to give to it all our heart and soul and understanding, rather than to stand and cavil at the other alternative, which is in no way forced upon us, and which we may avoid if we please.

Yes ; these two alternatives, and these two only, are submitted to our choice ; holy Scripture names no other ; neither the ancient Church, nor the Church of England has invented any other. But while we have the hope of everlasting life, and behold within our reach the certain means of attaining it,

it will be our own fault if the thought of the other alternative gives us any serious uneasiness. We cannot indeed, and we dare not, drive it altogether from our minds, and its presence must prevent us from being entirely at our ease. Though we rejoice, we shall do so with trembling; though we trust that we are working out our salvation, still we shall not pass the time of our sojourning here without fear, lest after all we should be cast away. The effect, however, of this anxiety will be to prevent us from standing still, to make us press forward more eagerly towards the prize of the high calling which is set before us. If we have heartily accepted the Gospel of Christ, if it is our constant endeavour to follow his example, to be conformed to his will, the terrors of the Lord, and the judgments of his wrath, will not greatly affright our souls, nor occupy any large space in our thoughts. Our love of God, becoming gradually more and more perfect, will cast out all fear; and the riches of his mercy, the wonders of his redeeming grace, will be the objects of our contemplation now, as we trust they will be without interruption in the ages of eternity.

In that blissful contemplation, we trust, all they are now engaged who have departed

this life in the faith and fear of God. For we do not entertain the distressing thought, that they are at present passing through the flames of purgatory, paying the penalty of their sins before they enter into happiness. We believe that the penalty was paid once for all by Christ, so that there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. We believe that they are already blessed, and that they rest from their labours; and their rest we do not conceive to be a death-like sleep, a stupor of the soul, but a state of actual enjoyment, a foretaste of heaven. We believe that they are in that receptacle, be it where it may, which Christ called paradise, and which he visited with his human soul, and in which he is now peculiarly present with his divine nature; so that they who are there, being absent from the body, are present with him, and behold him, not indeed as yet in all the fulness of his Godhead, but far more clearly than ever he was manifested to them here. And we can scarcely doubt, that they form part of the general assembly and Church of the first-born, part of the great cloud of witnesses, who are spectators of our trials, and solicitous for our salvation; that the communion of saints subsists between them and us. So much we may venture to conclude with re-

gard to the spirits of just men made perfect. But “what they do in heaven with relation to us on earth, or what we ought to perform in reference to them in heaven, besides a reverential respect and study of imitation,” this, as Bishop Pearson observes, “is not revealed to us in the Scriptures, nor can be concluded by necessary deduction from any principles of Christianity.” We have no reason to think that they need our prayers, and therefore we offer none on their behalf; we cannot suppose that they are in a condition to receive our prayers, and therefore we address none to them; but in our prayers to God we do not pass them over. We bless his holy Name on their account, and beseech him “to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of his heavenly kingdom;” which may He in his mercy grant, for Jesus Christ’s sake our only Mediator and Advocate.

NOTES ON LECTURE VIII.

NOTE (A).

ORIGEN'S notion of purgatory may be seen in his treatise against Celsus, Lib. v. Celsus says it is absurd to suppose that God, ὡςπερ μάγειρος, will apply the fire to all the rest of mankind, but restore the Christians to their bodies. Origen answers, that possibly this mode of speaking was intended to impress those whom the Scripture calls the foolish and ignorant of this world, just as we tell children things adapted to the weakness of their understanding, in order to lead them to something better. This doctrine teaches that only the perfectly pure will escape the fire, *μόνους ἀγέυστους τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τῶν κολασέων διαμένειν τοὺς τὰ δόγματα καὶ τὰ ἥθη, καὶ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἄκρως κεκαθαρμένους*: the rest will be punished for a time: *τοὺς δὲ μὴ τοιούτους, κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν χρήζοντας τῆς διὰ πυρὸς κολάσεως οἰκονομίας, ἐν τούτοις ἐπὶ τινι τέλει ἔσεσθαι, ὃ τῷ Θεῷ ἀρμόζει ἐπάγειν τοῖς κατ' εἴκονα αὐτοῦ πεποιημένοις, καὶ παρα τὸ βούλημα τῆς κατ' εἴκονα φύσεως βεβιωκόσι*. In his 14th Homily on St. Luke he seems to consider every soul, without exception, liable to this process of purification: "Ego puto quod et post resurrectionem ex mortuis indigeamus sacramento eluente nos et purgante; nemo enim absque sordibus resurgere poterit; nec ullam posse animam reperiri, quæ omnibus statim vitiis careat."

St. Jerome (*Comm. in Isai.* Lib. xviii. cap. 66. Vol. iv. Ed. Venet. p. 830) supposes that the punishments of the Devil and of reprobate men will be eternal, but

“peccatorum atque impiorum, et tamen Christianorum, quorum opera in igne probanda sunt atque purganda, moderatam arbitramur et mixtā clementiæ sententiam judicis.” There is nothing in the passage or its context to indicate that he thought this purgation was to take place before the final judgment. He speaks diffidently on the subject; says that some persons think the future punishments, though of long duration, will have an end, relying on Rom. xi. 25, 26; Galat. iii. 22, &c. These persons advance the opinion, that the final *refrigeria* will take place, but are now “abscondenda ab his, quibus timor utilis est; ut dum supplicia reformidant, peccare desistant.” He does not refute this opinion, but says, “Quod nos Dei solius debemus scientiæ derelinquere, cujus non solum misericordiæ sed et tormenta in pondere sunt; et novit quem quamdiu et quomodo judicare. Solumque dicamus, quod humanæ convenit fragilitati, Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me; neque in ira tua corripas me.”

St. Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 24): “Facta resurrectione mortuorum non deerunt, quibus, post pœnas quos patiuntur spiritus mortuorum, impertiatur misericordia, ut in ignem non mittantur æternum. Neque enim de quibusdam veraciter diceretur quod non eis remittatur neque in hoc sæculo neque in futuro, nisi essent quibus etsi non in isto tamen remittetur in futuro.” He speaks more doubtfully in chap. 26 of the same book: “Post istius sane corporis mortem donec ad illum veniatur qui post resurrectionem futurus est damnationis et renunciationis ultimus dies, si hoc temporis intervallo spiritus defunctorum ejusmodi ignem dicuntur perpeti quem non sentiant illi qui non habuerunt tales mores et amores in hujus corporis vita, ut eorum ligna et fœnum et stipula consumatur; alii vero sentiant, qui ejusmodi secum ædi-

ficia portaverunt, sive ibi tantum, sive et hic et ibi, sive ideo hic ut non ibi, secularia, quamvis a damnatione venialia concremantem ignem transitoriae tribulationis inveniant, non redarguo, quia forsitan verum est." And so *Enchirid.* 69, he refers 1 Cor. iii. 10, in the first instance, to the tribulations and mortifications experienced in this life, and adds, "Tale aliquid etiam post hanc vitam fieri incredibile non est, et utrum ita sit quæri potest." See *Comm. in Ps.* vi. 1 et xxxviii. 1. *Ad Dulcit.* § 13.

Pope Gregory the Great first made the doctrine of purgatory an article of faith. He says (*Dial.* iv. 39), after quoting John xii. 35, 2 Cor. vi. 2, &c., ἐκ πασῶν οὖν μαρτυριῶν τούτων φανέρως δείκνυται, ὅτι οἶος ἐκ τῶν ἐνταῦθα ἐξέλθῃ ἕκαστος, τοιοῦτος καὶ ἐν τῇ κρίσει παραστήσεται. πλὴν ὁμως περὶ τινων ἐλαφροτέρων πταισμάτων καθαρτικὸν εἶναι πῦρ πρὸ τῆς κρίσεως πιστευτέον. He then quotes Matt. xii. 31; but limits this to slight offences, such as immoderate laughter, &c. He quotes with some hesitation 1 Cor. iii. 10—12. He says this purification will not be obtained hereafter unless a man does his best to purify himself here. He mentions the case of one Paschasius, who was said to have appeared after death, and testified of purgatory.

At the Council of Florence, held in 1439, a committee of Greek and Latin Fathers was appointed to investigate the doctrine of purgatory. They reported in favour of the doctrine, citing the following authorities: 2 Macc. xii. 43—45; Matt. xii. 32; 1 Cor. iii. 15; the authority of the holy Roman Church instructed by St. Peter and St. Paul, "quæ sic semper tenuit, semper prædicavit;" Augustin. *Homil. de Purgat.*; Idem, *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. cap. 13, 20; Idem, in lib. *De Cur. pro Mort.*; Idem, in lib. *De Penitentia*; Idem, in *Sermone de Mortuis*; S. Ambros. in 1 Cor. iii.; S. Gregor. *Dial.* iv. 39; S. Basil. *Prec. in Vigil. Pente-*

cost. ; Gregor. Nyss. in *Dial. de Consol. et statu Animar. post mortem*. S. Dionys. *Eccles. Hierarch.* cap. 7. S. Epiphan. *adv. Hæres.* 57, &c. Upon receiving this report, the Council passed the following Decree ;

“ Si vere pœnitentes in Dei caritate decesserint, antequam dignis pœnitentiæ fructibus de commissis satisfecerint et de omissis, eorum animas pœnis purgatoriis post mortem purgari, et ad pœnas hujusmodi relevandas prodesset eis fidelium vivorum suffragia, missarum scilicet sacrificia, orationes et eleemosynas, et alia pietatis officia, quæ a fidelibus fieri consueverunt, secundum ecclesiæ instituta ; illorumque animas, qui post sacrum baptismum susceptum nullam omnino maculam incurrerunt, illas etiam quæ post contractam peccati maculam vel in suis corporibus, vel eadem exutæ, prout superius dictum est, sunt purgatæ, in cœlum mox recipi, et intueri clare ipsum Deum trinum et unum, sicuti est, licet alius alio perfectius ; illorum autem animas, qui in mortali actuali peccato, vel solo originali decedunt, mox in infernum descendere ; pœnis tamen disparibus puniendas.” Labbe, Concil. XIII. 1131.

NOTE (B).

THE word αἰώνιος is repeatedly used in the New Testament, with reference both to the happiness of the blessed and the punishment of the wicked. It is joined with the following words ; ζωή (forty-four times), σωτηρία (once), λύτρωσις (once), παράκλησις (once), κληρονομία (once), οἰκία (once), σκηνή (once, Luke xvi. 9), εὐαγγέλιον (once), διαθήκη (once), βασιλεία (once), αὐτόν (once, Philem. 15), βάρος δόξης (once), δόξα (once), κράτος (twice), Θεός (once), Πνεῦμα (once), πῦρ (three times), κόλασις (once), κρίσις (once),

κρίμα (once), ὀλεθρος (once). In all these instances it appears to have the same sense, *everlasting, for ever*; also with χρόνοι (three times, *e. g.* 2 Tim. i. 9, πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων), which seems to be an hyperbole, like ὕψη αἰώνια in the LXX version of Ps. lxxvi. 4. The Christian writers of the apostolic age, St Clement of Rome, Ignatius and Polycarp, follow the common usage of the New Testament, and join αἰώνιος with ζωή, κόλασις, πῦρ, &c.

The words αἰὼν, αἰώνιος, being of great importance in Scripture, it is of interest to ascertain their history. Not finding that this has been done in the Lexicons, nor in the books referred to by Dr Burton in his discussion of αἰὼν (*Bamp. Lect.*, pp. 110, 407), I have given below the results at which I have myself arrived:—

1. αἰὼν occurs thirteen times in the Iliad and Odyssey, always meaning *the term of human life, the lifetime of man*; and in this sense alone it is used by other early writers, by Hesiod, Pindar, Simonides, Herodotus. The ancient usage therefore does not bear out the etymology suggested by Aristotle (*De Cælo*, i. 9), and commonly adopted, ὁ αἰὼν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀεὶ εἶναι. And when Dr Burton says, “It is almost demonstrable, that in its primary sense αἰὼν was applied to an indefinite period, and that period was relatively a long one;” this assertion appears to be incorrect, except in so far as *the term of human life* is an indefinite period, and, relatively, a long one.

2. Æschylus generally follows the Homeric usage, but occasionally employs the word in the sense of *indefinite duration*, irrespective of human life; *e. g.* *Suppl.* 46. μόρσιμος αἰὼν; *Suppl.* 577. Ζεὺς αἰῶνος κρέων ἀπαύστου. Being a Pythagorean, he might have derived this use of the word from Pythagoras, who is represented by Justin Martyr (*Cohort. ad Gr.* p. 18) as describing God to be

ἐπισκοπῶν πάσας τὰς γενέσεις, καὶ κρᾶσις ἐὼν τῶν ὅλων αἰώνων : “presiding over all generations, and uniting in himself the sum of all durations.” Sophocles and Xenophon keep steadily to the Homeric usage. Euripides, a philosophic poet, also uses αἰὼν in the sense of *indefinite duration* ; he has the remarkable expression, πολλὰ γὰρ τίκτει μοῖρα τελεσιδότηερ’, Αἰὼν τε κρονόυ παῖς. (*Herac.* 900.) “Nume-
 rous is the progeny of all-accomplishing Fate, and AGE
 THE SON OF CRONUS” (thus personifying αἰὼν.)

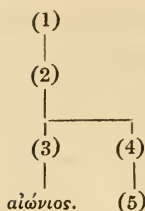
3. Plato sometimes follows the Homeric usage, but he is the first writer who clearly and expressly employs ὁ αἰὼν to signify eternity, and places it in emphatic contra-
 distinction to Time, ὁ χρόνος ; *Locr.* 97. D. πρὸς παραδείγμα, τὸν αἰῶνα, ὅδε ὁ χρόνος σὺν κοσμῷ ἐδαμουργήθη. In Plato’s writings also, we first, I think, meet with the adjective αἰώνιος ; it is used by him seven times, and always in the same sense, *everlasting, for ever* ; e. g. *Locr.* 96. C. θεὸν τὸν αἰώνιον. *Tim.* 38. C. κατὰ παραδείγμα τῆς αἰωνίου φύσεως. *Locr.* 105. ἀγεννάτω καὶ αἰωνίου, “without beginning and without end.” The Platonic sense of αἰὼν, αἰώνιος, passed over, with the Platonic philosophy, to Alexandria ; in that sense αἰώνιος is used by the Alexandrine poet Callimachus (*Hymn. ad Dian.* 6). Philo Judæus, following in the steps of Plato, calls αἰὼν, τὸ χρόνου παραδείγμα καὶ ἀρχέτυπον ; and adds αἰὼν γὰρ ἀναγράφεται τοῦ νοητοῦ βίος κόσμου, ὡς καὶ αἰσθητοῦ χρόνος (*De Mutatione Nominum*, Vol. 1. p. 619, where Mangey in his note adduces in illustration of this sense of αἰὼν, *Sirac.* xvii. 10 ; *Clem. Alex. Strom.* 1. p. 349 ; *Greg. Nazianz. Orat.* 38). In the same sense the words were used by the LXX to translate the Hebrew עוֹלָם, עוֹלָמִית. Hence the Platonic sense of the words, even if it had not passed into general use, would be familiar to the sacred writers of the New Testament.

It remains to notice two senses of αἰών, neither of which are strictly classical;—

4. A state of things lasting for an indefinite period is sometimes called αἰών; thus we find both in the LXX and in the New Testament such expressions as the following: ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος, this world, ὁ μέλλον αἰὼν, the future world, οἱ αἰῶνες, the worlds, the universe.

5. The Gnostics imagined certain emanations from the Divine essence, which they personified, supposing them to create and preside over the universe; to these they gave the name αἰῶνες. The origin of this sense of the word cannot be referred to any particular date or author. We have seen above that Euripides had set the example of personifying Æon; and Damascius, a writer of the sixth century, asserts that the Alexandrians in former times honoured a God named Αἰών; he is quoted by Suidas (sub voce διαγνώμων) as speaking of τὸ ἄρρῆτον ἄγαλμα τοῦ Αἰῶνος ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ κατεχόμενον, ὃ οἱ Ἀλεξανδρεῖς ἐτίμησαν, Ὅσιριν ὄντα καὶ Ἄδωνιν ὁμοῦ κατὰ μυστικὴν θεοκρασίαν. (See also Suid. sub voc. Ἐπιφάνιος καὶ Εὐπρέπιος). It is supposed that St. Paul has occasionally alluded to this sense of αἰών, e. g. in Heb. i. 2. δι' οὗ καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν. See Burton's *Bamp. Lect.*, p. 111.

We may therefore distinguish five different senses of αἰών; (1) the term of human life; (2) an indefinite duration, irrespective of human life; (3) infinite duration, eternity; and this seems to be the only sense in which the adjective αἰώνιος is used; (4) that which has indefinite duration, the world; (5) the being who was supposed to create and preside over the world, the Æon. And these senses appear to be derived from each other in the following order:—



Before we close our discussion of these words, it may be worth while to notice a peculiarity in St. John's use of them.

In the Gospel and Epistles of St. John *αἰὼν* occurs only in the singular number with a preposition, viz :

εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, "for ever," twelve times in the Gospel and once in the Epistles.

ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος, "from everlasting," once in the Gospel (ix. 32).

In the Apocalypse *αἰὼν* is never used in this way, but only in the phrase (which is more in accordance with the Hebrew idiom) *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων*, "for ever and ever;" this occurs fourteen times.

Again, in the Gospel and Epistles *αἰώνιος* is found twenty-three times in conjunction with *ζωή* (viz. seventeen times in the Gospel and six times in the Epistles); but with no other word; whereas in the Apocalypse *αἰώνιος* is only once used, and then is joined with *εὐαγγέλιον*.

LECTURE IX.

THE EXPECTATION OF A FUTURE LIFE CONSIDERED AS A MOTIVE.

1 COR. XV. 58.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

SUCH is the exhortation with which the Apostle concludes his account of the doctrine of the Resurrection. Having first unfolded the “mystery” so far as he was permitted to explain it, he bursts out for a moment into exclamations of joy, at the thought of the “victory,” as he calls it, in which Death is to be swallowed up; but presently he recalls himself from this triumphant strain, and takes leave of the subject upon which he has been engaged, by recommending it to us as a motive for patient continuance in well-doing. The knowledge that our labour is not in vain should lead us, he says, to be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord. The whole chapter is endeared to us by the remembrance that it is continually heard in our churches, whenever dust is given back to dust, and earth to earth. And how often have these closing words remained in the ear of the mourner, and given peace and courage to his heart, as he has risen and gone forth from the house of God, to finish the ceremony for which he came, and then to return into the busy world. Who would wish to withdraw from him this topic of consolation; who would venture to tell him that this theme, though true, is not sublime enough for him, though real, is unworthy of his meditation; that his spirit must be buoyed up, and his resolution quickened by other thoughts than this? We might suppose that the motives to present exertion which arise from the contemplation of the future life, would be felt and acknowledged by all; and that however much in practice they may be disregarded, no persons would be found openly to reject them. They have however been called in question and disparaged, not only by unbelievers, but even by some among the disciples of the Gospel. And therefore, as we have been expounding the doctrine of a future life, in accordance, we trust, with the teaching of St. Paul, we can-

not do better than follow his example to the end, and conclude our meditations on this lofty theme by insisting on the practical considerations, the motives and inducements to good, which it supplies.

No one indeed can read the books of the New Testament without seeing, that the doctrine of a future life is not merely revealed as a truth, but put forward most prominently as a motive of action. We are not left to draw our own inferences as to its practical importance; our attention is forcibly directed to that point. It is the great topic of those beatitudes with which our blessed Lord appears to have commenced his public ministry. When he was set down upon the mount, he opened his mouth and said¹, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And in that strain he continued his discourse; he declared that under the most severe of all trials, when men revile us and persecute us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely for his sake, even then we may rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is our reward in heaven. At another time he cautions us against the love of this world, and bids us lay up our treasure not on the earth, but in heaven. He commands the

¹ Matt. v. 3.

avaricious man to sell all he has and give to the poor, offering him as a compensation the promise of great treasure in heaven¹. He proclaims that they who suffer loss for his sake and the Gospel's, shall not only receive more than an equivalent in this life, but shall have in the world to come eternal life². Again, St. Paul at one time uses the terrors of the Lord to persuade men, at another he speaks with commendation of Moses³, because he had respect to the recompense of reward; and in like manner he says with regard to our blessed Lord, who in his human nature was a pattern to us of all holy desires and good counsels, as well as of all just works, that even he, as man, was under the influence of this motive; he, for the joy that was set before him, "endured the cross, and despised the shame⁴;" thereby shewing us, how for the joy that is set before us we also ought to endure tribulation. And though we are not able, with our imperfect faculties, to comprehend the exact nature of the future reward, yet in order that it may be desirable in our eyes, it is compared to those objects which most delight our senses and in the pursuit of which we are willing to spare no

¹ Mark x. 21.² Mark x. 29.³ Heb. xi. 26.⁴ Heb. xii. 2.

pains; to a pearl of great price, which must be purchased, to a garland won by running a weary race, to a mansion where we may rest from our labours, to a kingdom in which we are to reign, after that we have suffered.

But it is necessary to bear in mind the relation which this motive has to the other principles of action. For though it was mentioned so emphatically by our Lord and his Apostles, it was not intended to be the only motive, nor indeed to be pre-eminent above all the rest. The prospect of an infinite reward, if it were to be obtained immediately, and without delay, would indeed engross our thoughts, and become paramount above every other consideration. But it is removed from us by the interval of a few short years, or weeks, or days; an interval undoubtedly very brief, but of uncertain duration, and which seems to extend on before us almost to an infinite distance, so that we cannot see the end of it. Thus the prospect of eternity does not bear that disproportion to our other motives which it would have if we felt it to be close at hand. It does not paralyse, as it would, the ordinary springs of action. Many of us, I fear, have reason to lament that we are scarcely sensible of its influence. It was evidently not the intention of the Gospel, and

it has not been its effect, to make the hope of futurity the only motive of our conduct. The intention was to make it a leading and cardinal motive, but still in conjunction with others. Christ came not to destroy the moral law, but to fulfil it, and make it complete. He sanctioned all the dictates of conscience, all the incentives to good which had been originally implanted in our nature. There are two great principles, the love of God, and the love of man, to one or other of which the whole circle of our duties may be referred. He was very far from superseding them. He declared that the first and great commandment is, “to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself¹.” These two great and original principles of our nature, the love of God and the love of man, piety and benevolence, filial obedience to our common Father, brotherly kindness towards each other, he sanctioned by his precept, he enforced by his example; and still further to strengthen those principles, he declared that he who allows himself to be governed by them hath the hope of everlasting life. Indeed, he made that hope

¹ Matt. xxii. 37.

to depend entirely upon our being ruled by those principles. Merely to do such and such things will not ensure us eternal life, unless the actions proceed from the right motives, from the love of God and the love of man. In offering that reward, he did not set aside those principles, but had especial respect to them. And in order that we might really be actuated by them, that we might cherish them in our hearts, and not observe them merely in our outward conduct, he sent his holy Spirit, who enables us not only to do what is right, but to do it from the right motive, to will as well as to do aright, both to will and to do after his good pleasure. Thus these three motives, the love of God, the love of man, and the hope of the reward, have been intimately united and blended together by him, so as greatly to support and corroborate each other. And what he has joined, we have no right or power to put asunder. We cannot, if we would, make our election among them, nor say, that we choose to be governed by the hope of reward, without reference to the other two, or that we will entertain them, and exclude this entirely from our minds.

It might seem unnecessary to make these observations, did we not know that there have been persons, not only in preceding ages, but

even in our own times, who have maintained that the hope of reward is not a legitimate motive of action, that whether the reward be temporal or eternal, finite or infinite, the expectation of it is a mercenary principle, not worthy of our noble and exalted nature. Such is said to have been the opinion of the ancient Sadducees¹, who maintained that we ought to do good without reference to the reward; and so they went on to deny that there would be any future retribution, or any future life at all. And we might almost suppose that St. Paul was referring to, and opposing the Sadducean notion, when in his Epistle to the Hebrews² he enumerated the long catalogue of patriarchs and saints, who under all kinds of trial and persecution were supported by their reliance on God's promises, by their expectation of a better country, by their hope of the recompense of the reward. But to come down to Christian times, it appears that so early as the second century³ an objection was

¹ See Prideaux, *Connexion of the Old and New Testament*, Vol. II. p. 64. (Ed. M'Caul, 1845.)

² Chap. xi.

³ Justin. Martyr, 2 Apol. c. 9: ἵνα δὲ μή τις εἴπῃ τὸ λεγόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν νομιζομένων φιλοσόφων, ὅτι κόμποι καὶ φόβη-
τρά ἐστι τὰ λεγόμενα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, ὅτι κολάζονται ἐν αἰωνίῳ πυρὶ οἱ ἄδικοι, καὶ διὰ φόβον, ἀλλ' οὐ διὰ τὸ καλὸν εἶναι καὶ ἀρεσ-
τὸν, ἐναρέτως βιοῦν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀξιούμεν· βραχυπεῶς πρὸς
τοῦτο ἀποκρινοῦμαι, ὅτι εἰ μὴ τοῦτό ἐστιν, οὔτε ἐστὶ θεὸς, ἢ εἰ

made to the Gospel, probably by some of the Stoic philosophers, on the ground that it endeavoured to frighten men from sin by the fear of punishment, and to allure them to virtue by the hope of a future reward; whereas virtue ought to have been represented as its own all-sufficient reward, not merely the means, but the end; not merely the way to happiness, but happiness itself. And the same objection has been repeated by infidel writers in our own time¹. And we know that a notion of the same kind has been entertained by some persons, who however mistaken they may have been on this point, were in other respects devoted and zealous members of the Church of God. In the seventeenth century there existed a sect of Christians under the name of Quietists², who made a profession of being actuated exclusively by the love of God, saying that this principle is an all-sufficient motive, and that no other is necessary for our guidance or worthy of our

ἔστιν, οὐ μέλει αὐτῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἀρετῇ, οὐδὲ κακία, καὶ ὡς προέφημεν, ἀδίκως τιμωροῦσιν οἱ νομοθέται τοὺς παραβαίνοντας τὰ διατεταλμένα καλά.

¹ So Strauss, *Glaubenslehre*, Vol. II. ad fin. See also Lessing, *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, VI. p. 326. Wieland, *Euthanasie*, p. 303. Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, II. 69.

² See Note at the end of this Lecture.

regard. God is himself, they said, the supreme and only good ; the only object of our desires and affections ; we need no servile fears nor mercenary hopes as incentives to obey him ; his own perfections are an irresistible attraction. It is positively wrong to allow ourselves to be influenced by any thoughts of reward or punishment, of paradise or hell, of death or eternity. We must bring our souls into such a state of contemplation and love of God, that we may cease to have any regard either for our temporal or eternal interest, and look upon earthly happiness and the bliss of heaven with equal indifference, being prepared to accept or forego either the one or the other according to God's good pleasure. This doctrine, though formally condemned by the pope, and abjured by its author, still maintained its ground, and was advocated, with some modification, by the celebrated Archbishop Fénelon. It also exercised a considerable though transient influence in this country, if we may judge by the manner in which it was censured by some of our own divines¹.

There are therefore two classes of persons, who have denied that the hope of reward is a

¹ See South's *Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 430. Bishop Butler, Sermon XIII. *On the Love of God* (in init.)

legitimate motive of action ; the sceptics, who make it an objection to the Gospel, and the mystics, who think the Gospel is complete without it. Now with regard to this latter class, who profess to be Christians, their language at first sight is plausible, and has in it something sublime and noble ; yet we make a sufficient answer to them, when we remind them, that the hope of reward is distinctly held out as a motive, both in those passages of Scripture which I have already quoted, and in many others. And this being the case, God having declared that such and such motives are acceptable in his sight, we have no right to make our election among them, and say we will take such an one for the single rule of our life, much less may we condemn any one, or pronounce it unworthy of our regard. What God has declared to be clean, we may not call common ; that hope of heaven, which was purchased for us by the blood of the covenant, we may not deem an unholy thing. We have no more right to discard any one of the motives proposed to us in the Gospel, than we have to throw into the background any one of its doctrines, or to reject any one of its historical facts. The love of God, it is asserted, is a sufficient motive, and we need no other. But what is it to love God

with all our heart? Is it not to make subordinate to him our every thought and wish; to have no desire but to do his will, no pleasure but in pleasing him, no sorrow but in offending him? The attainment of such perfect love must indeed be the object of our highest wishes and prayers. We hope to have it hereafter, and to make an approach to it here. But let us not deceive ourselves. Can any one of us, can the best of us lay his hand upon his heart, and say that he has already attained to it. Is it not the case, that the more a man advances in self-knowledge, and Christian goodness, the more he sees reason to lament the coldness of his heart towards God, the iniquity of his holy things? A system which goes on the supposition that such perfect love is attainable in this life, and ought to be the only all-engrossing motive of action, is evidently a chimerical and impracticable system, as well as repugnant to the Word of God. It must be sufficient for the *Christian* to know that Christ has neither enjoined such a system, nor rendered it practicable. But as the *sceptic* maintains that according to his theory it ought to be practicable, and that the Gospel, in holding out the hope of reward, is appealing to low and unworthy motives, and that a law which appeals to such motives can-

not be a divine Revelation, we must join issue with him upon this point. And this we do, by denying that the Gospel appeals to any low and sordid motives, or that any one of its motives is less pure and less exalted than another. We can tell whether the motives are suited to our nature and necessities; but whether one is in itself more or less pure than another, we have no subtle test, by which we can determine. The love of God, the love of our neighbour, the hope of reward, each of these principles is so vast, so powerful, so comprehensive, and they are so interwoven and profoundly blended in our nature, that we can hardly contemplate them separately, and much less can we weigh them together. We may admit it to be possible, and even probable, that there are beings of a nature different from our own, in whose constitution the principles of hope and fear have no place; with whom the desire to obey God and accomplish his bidding, is the one simple never-failing motive. Such may be the condition of the blessed angels, whose perfect obedience depends not upon any considerations of reward and punishment. It is also conceivable, and not improbable, that in the future state, when hope has been swallowed up in certainty, the love of God and mutual love will

remain our only motives, ever sufficient to excite our energies, and fill our souls with joy. Neither do we think so ill of human nature as to assert, that these two motives, the love of God and love of man, are not, of themselves, strong enough to produce in this life many instances of noble devotion, of heroic self-denial and self-sacrifice. No doubt, in the lives of many saintly persons one or other of these motives may be found peculiarly prominent; while the hope of reward, whether temporal or eternal, does not seem to enter greatly into their consideration. Though our nature is very far gone from original righteousness, it still retains some impress of that divine image and superscription which was originally stamped upon it; and perhaps there are few persons so abandoned, few so hardened in sin, that they are not occasionally stirred to some good deed by feelings which are entirely disinterested, and which have no respect to any kind of recompense. We do not go so far as to say, that disinterested motives are altogether inoperative, or, in the language of an eminent divine¹, that it is the “natural complexion of virtue and duty, to raise in the soul a kind of horror and aversion of it.” Better is the philosophy of the heathen writer who

¹ South's *Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 130.

said, that virtue, if it could be made visible to the outward eye, would excite within us a wondrous love and desire. But this we say, that if left to themselves, disinterested motives, as they are called, are not sufficient to guide and support our erring and fallen nature. This is proved by universal experience, by the testimony of all ages and nations. Every code of laws, every system of religion, gives evidence to this effect, and declares that in order to render men just and temperate, pious and devout, an appeal must be addressed to their hopes and fears, to their regard for present or future happiness.

What a place is this seat of learning in which we are now assembled, this scene of joyous youth, this school of severe discipline! The hopes of many parents are fixed here, looking to receive back from hence a comfort and stay for their advancing years. The expectation of our country is ever turned towards this place, demanding a supply of men duly qualified to serve her, and to serve God, in Church and State. We believe and trust that a large portion of our body are answering well to these fond hopes and just expectations. What steady activity we here behold, what cheerful submission to intellectual and moral training; what high purposes are formed,

what perseverance, what self-denial is exercised! Notwithstanding its many undeniable and lamentable short-comings, still we maintain that this place is to the many, and not merely to the few, a school of discipline, of culture, and of progress. But it is impossible to say that no part of these good results is due to the honours and rewards which are here proposed; honours and rewards, than which the hand of man has none purer, none more precious to bestow.

But we need not enlarge upon this subject; for it is perfectly obvious, that no system which man might devise for the government of his fellow-creatures would have the slightest prospect of success, if it did not recognise as powerful and legitimate motives, either the hope of reward or the fear of punishment. The objection to the Christian Dispensation therefore amounts to this, that it exactly meets the wants of our nature, and sets before us a motive, which, as all experience shews, is essential to the full development of our mental and moral energies. It condescends to treat men as they are, and not as they are not. It agrees in this respect with every system of human origin. It falls in also with the general plan of God's providence. For on the whole, and in the long run, he even in this

world rewards the virtuous, and punishes the wrong-doer. Even in this his temporal economy he holds out a strong incentive to virtue, and a discouragement to vice. Men know, and every day act upon the knowledge, that there is a retribution even in this world. Who then will dare to impute it to Christianity as a defect, that it is in harmony with every known system of human policy, and with the general tendency of God's moral government as we see it carried on in this present life?

But we are to remember that Christianity is not a new and untried system, to be judged merely by *à priori* considerations of what is likely to be fitting and beneficial. It has been in action long enough for its results to be observed. By its fruits it may be known. We have said that the Gospel proposes to us certain motives of action not separately but conjunctively, the love of God, the love of man, the expectation of a future life. Still it may occasionally happen, that one of these motives is more active than another, and that some results may be distinctly traced not to the joint operation of all, but to the single energy of one. I have already admitted that there are cases in which the disinterested motives appear to be predominant. There are many good men who seem to be governed,

at least on some occasions, exclusively by the love of God, or by the love of man, without any regard to their own temporal or eternal interests. But are there no results which may be distinctly traced to the expectation of a future life? Ask those who have had most experience of mankind; those who have visited the haunts of sin, and sat in the chamber of sickness, and frequented the house of mourning; those who have been conversant with the trials, the temptations, and the agonies of human nature. They are witnesses to the great practical effects produced by the expectation of the world to come. They can tell of cases, where the soul has been assailed by such vehement temptation, that every good principle has been overborne, and only the fear of the divine vengeance has held its ground and prevailed; now disarming the hand which was uplifted in anger, envy or revenge; now stifling the false oath when it was at the point of utterance; now interposing a barrier to the guilty lusts and appetites of men. And on the other hand, how many a true tale might be told of men stricken with affliction, deserted by friends, unjustly censured by the world, left without one earthly consolation, who have found the hope of heaven, and the anticipation of God's righteous judgments, to

be an unfailing support, and have thence derived a composure of mind, a steadiness of purpose, a cheerfulness, yea a joy, at which the world wonders, because the world can neither give it nor take it away. These are cases of every-day occurrence; many of us, I doubt not, have witnessed such; and some of us I would hope have been themselves examples of these things unto others.

But we must not forget that the principle of which I speak has been subjected to a still severer test. There was a time when those who professed the name of Christ were exposed to persecutions, tortures and death. We know as a matter of fact that the martyrs and confessors of the faith were supported in their hour of trial by the certain hope of glory. They were persuaded that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which was to be revealed in them¹;" that their light affliction which was but for a moment, would work for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory²." They thought it not strange, concerning the fiery trial which awaited them, but rejoiced, as St. Peter³ bade them, inasmuch as they were partakers of Christ's suf-

¹ Rom. viii. 18.

² 2 Cor. iv. 17.

³ 1 Pet. iv. 13.

ferings, "that when his glory shall be revealed, they may be glad also with exceeding joy." So they witnessed a good confession, and glorified God. These instances of Christian heroism struck with admiration even the enemies of the Gospel, and made many converts to the faith. The fabric of the Church was cemented by the blood of the martyrs. And they shed their blood freely; for they feared not them who hurt the body, knowing that their life was already hid with Christ in God.

In all these cases then we may clearly discern the expectation of a future life, acting as a powerful motive of conduct. Not indeed that we intend to limit the operation of that motive to these particular cases. We should rather say that in the mind of the good Christian it is scarcely ever dormant, and that in conjunction with the other great motives, the love of God and the love of man, it is acting habitually, almost insensibly, giving him a sustained and uniform character, which he could hardly preserve without such a support; while it occasionally shews a distinct and marked energy of its own, in such cases as I have now mentioned. But these cases I have particularly insisted upon, as a palpable refutation of the sceptic. A prin-

ciple which comes to our aid just when the other principles of our nature appear to fail, and upholds us, as I have shewn this does, in the hour of our sorest trial, is not to be lightly rejected as a low, sordid, and unworthy motive. Its practical effects afford a presumption in its favour. And since it is also in harmony, as we have seen, with the sanctions of human laws, and with the general course of God's providential government in this world, it is so far from being an objection to the system of which it forms a part, that we should rather say its omission would be an apparent objection and an anomaly requiring explanation.

No; we cannot afford to dispense with this motive, nor indeed with any principle which tends to animate afresh our ever drooping and fainting resolutions. Sore let and hindered as we are in running the race which is set before us, we should gladly avail ourselves of every thing that will help us forward in our course. Motives of personal interest, even the prospect of temporal advantage, the thirst for knowledge, the ambition to attain an earthly prize, regard for the good opinion of those with whom we live, each of these is a legitimate spring of action; a large part of our daily conduct is unquestionably regulated by considerations of this nature; and we should

most probably be worse men than we are, had we no such spurs and incentives to good. We can hardly doubt, that unprofitable servants as we now are, we should not serve God any better, if we were to renounce all the occupations and ties, all the motives and sentiments which arise from our intercourse with the world. To this conclusion at least we are led by the experience of former ages. The total abnegation of this world and its motives was the principle upon which the monastic system was originally founded. And though that system conferred incidentally some blessings upon society, and produced many individual instances of goodness and greatness, yet these favourable results very frequently proceeded not from the observance, but from the infraction of the principle upon which the system was based, and cannot therefore with safety be adduced in its favour; while on the other hand many serious evils were engendered in the monastic institutions, which appear to have been inherent in their nature, and inevitable. We must therefore acknowledge that the system failed in accomplishing its original intention; and having been tried on a great scale, through many ages, with every advantage, and been found unsuccessful, it has established this truth

beyond controversy, that a total retirement from the world and its concerns is not generally favourable to religion and virtue. Neither is such a retirement anywhere enforced or recommended in holy Scripture. We are not called upon to abjure the prospect of worldly happiness and enjoyment. We are at liberty to go about our temporal affairs and be fervent in them ; always however remembering that these transitory concerns must be made subservient to our eternal interest, our worldly pursuits must be altogether controlled and overruled by the expectation of the judgment to come and its everlasting consequences. And while we never lose sight of that motive, and ever hold fast that blessed hope, we are sure it can never make us selfish or cold-hearted ; for it is joined in an indissoluble union with the love of God and the love of man ; so that it is impossible for us to work out our own salvation without the exercise of entirely disinterested motives, without earnestly desiring and heartily endeavouring to promote the glory of God and the good of our fellow-creatures.

Such then is the expectation of a future life, considered practically, as a motive of action. It does not expel all other motives, nor exercise an undivided sway in the heart.

It is intimately blended with two other great and eternal principles, piety and benevolence, the love of God and the love of man : and in conjunction with these, it controls and overrules, but does not absolutely extinguish, our lesser and temporal motives, our views of earthly happiness and enjoyment. Though it may be always present to the mind, it does not at all times make itself perceived. While life goes smoothly with us, we may not be strongly sensible of its influence. But when the hour of trial comes, as come it will ; when temptation presses closely upon us, when affliction or adversity weighs us down, then it will arouse itself in its omnipotence. It will enable us to bear and forbear. It will brace us up for great and noble acts of devotion and self-denial. In its strength we shall go forth against all the enemies of our salvation, and be more than conquerors.

Such a hope mankind now has, “as an anchor of the soul.” There was a time when human nature, all uncertain of its future destiny, might be compared to the fabulous island of antiquity, which floated to and fro, the sport of the winds, and often buried under the waves, until a divine personage was born in it¹; from which time it became

¹ Callim. *Hymn. in Del.* 51.

firm and fixed. But now, since Christ has taken up his abode with us, and immortal hopes have sprung up in us, it becomes us to be, in the words of the Apostle, stedfast and unmoveable; not drifting with the changeful tide of the world's opinion, not depressed by affliction or afraid of any evil tidings; continuing instant in prayer and in the contemplation of heavenly things; among the sundry and manifold chances and changes of the world, keeping our hearts there where true joys are to be found; from whatever side the waves of this troublesome world may beat against us, remaining stedfast, unmoveable. And if that island to which I refer was accounted such a holy place, that no signs of decay and corruption were permitted to be seen in it, and the bodies of the dying and the ashes of the dead were carried forth from it¹; so also the soul of man is now no place for anything that has to do with death, for sinful thoughts or corrupt desires, or whatsoever may offend the living God, who hath his abode and temple within us. We must purify ourselves, even as he is pure: and be full not of subtlety and mischief, not of evil passions, strife and envyings, but abounding, as the Apostle says, in the work of the Lord,

¹ Thucyd. iii. 104.

full of grace and truth, full of alms and mercy and good deeds. We must labour to accomplish the will of God, and submit ourselves cheerfully to be the instruments of his right hand: knowing that though to men we may seem to toil in vain, yet our labour will not be in vain in the Lord; for he now seeth in secret, and will hereafter reward us openly.

It is the Lord's work that we have to do, and to him we look for our reward. Our earthly employments and concerns are not to be regarded as so many grovelling and trifling occupations, having a reference only to this mortal life. They are the work which God has given us to do; and in a way which we cannot at present understand, they will have an influence upon our eternal happiness. These few fleeting hours, which pass by and seem irrevocable, do not altogether perish; though we can never recall them in this life, they will return to us, unbidden, in the next; and few as they are, they will impart their colour to all the ages which are to come. They set before us, as they pass, many objects of desire and hope, things which call forth, in one way or another, the various faculties of our nature. We pursue these objects, and trust that in doing so we are about our Father's business, and are advanc-

ing not only our temporal but our eternal welfare. These objects of our earthly desire, these temporal crowns, for which we are now contending, we may very likely fail to attain, and if we attain them, we shall find them to be corruptible and perishable crowns: but whether we gain or lose them is of no consequence, so long as we seek them, wear them, resign them, religiously, meekly, cheerfully. They are proposed to us, not as having any value in themselves, but on account of the discipline which we must undergo in the pursuit of them. If now we benefit by that discipline, and submit ourselves gladly to the chastening of the Lord, the true crown of glory will hereafter be awarded to us, even the inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

NOTE ON LECTURE IX.

MOLINOS, a Spanish priest resident in Italy, published towards the close of the seventeenth century a treatise, in which he advocated, as the most perfect condition of man, a state of continual contemplation and disinterested love of God. In developing this principle, he was led to conclusions utterly subversive of morality. He was condemned by Pope Innocent XI. in 1687; and in consideration of his making a complete retractation, his sentence was limited to perpetual penance and imprisonment; he died in prison in 1696. One of his propositions is as follows: "Non debet anima cogitare, nec de præmio, nec de punitione, nec de paradiso, nec de inferno, nec de morte, nec de æternitate." The following is an extract from a refutation of Molinos, written by Fénélon (date uncertain): "Il est faux qu'on ne doive penser ni à la récompense ni à la punition. Il est vrai que l'amour le plus pur et le plus parfait agit sans être attiré par les motifs des châtimens et des récompenses; mais ces motifs n'ont rien de mauvais, ni de défendu; on peut être fort saint en se les proposant. Quoiqu'un degré de perfection soit inférieur à un autre, il ne s'ensuit pas que l'inférieur soit contraire à la grâce. Ainsi il est faux et pernicieux de dire en général que le Chrétien ne doit penser ni à la récompense ni à la punition."

Molinos had an enthusiastic disciple in Madame Guyon, a French lady, from whose writings and conversation

Fénélon acquired the opinions which he published, in the year 1697, in the celebrated treatise entitled *Explication des Maximes des Saints sur la vie intérieure*. His views bear a great resemblance in some respects to those of Molinos; but there was this material difference, that according to the latter, every regard to self-interest has the nature of sin, and is offensive to God; according to Fénélon, it is allowable, and in many cases useful, although incompatible with that disinterested love of God which constitutes the highest attainable condition of the soul. In the course of his long controversy with Bossuet, he explained and qualified some of his statements, till there remained no substantial disagreement between him and his opponent. His book was however finally condemned by the pope; and he submitted himself to that decision. (*Œuvres de Fénélon*, ed. 1820, Vol. iv.)

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